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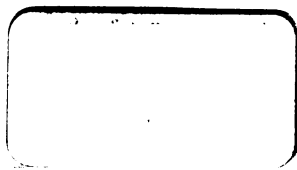
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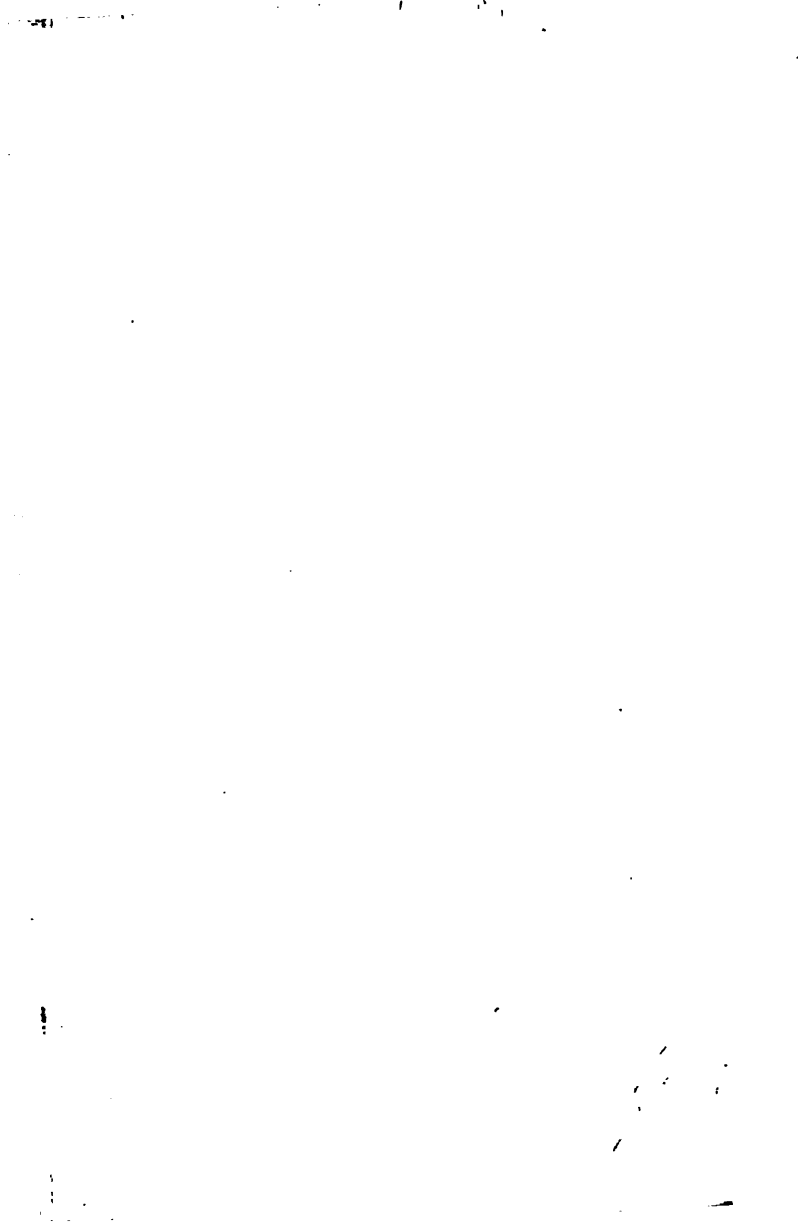
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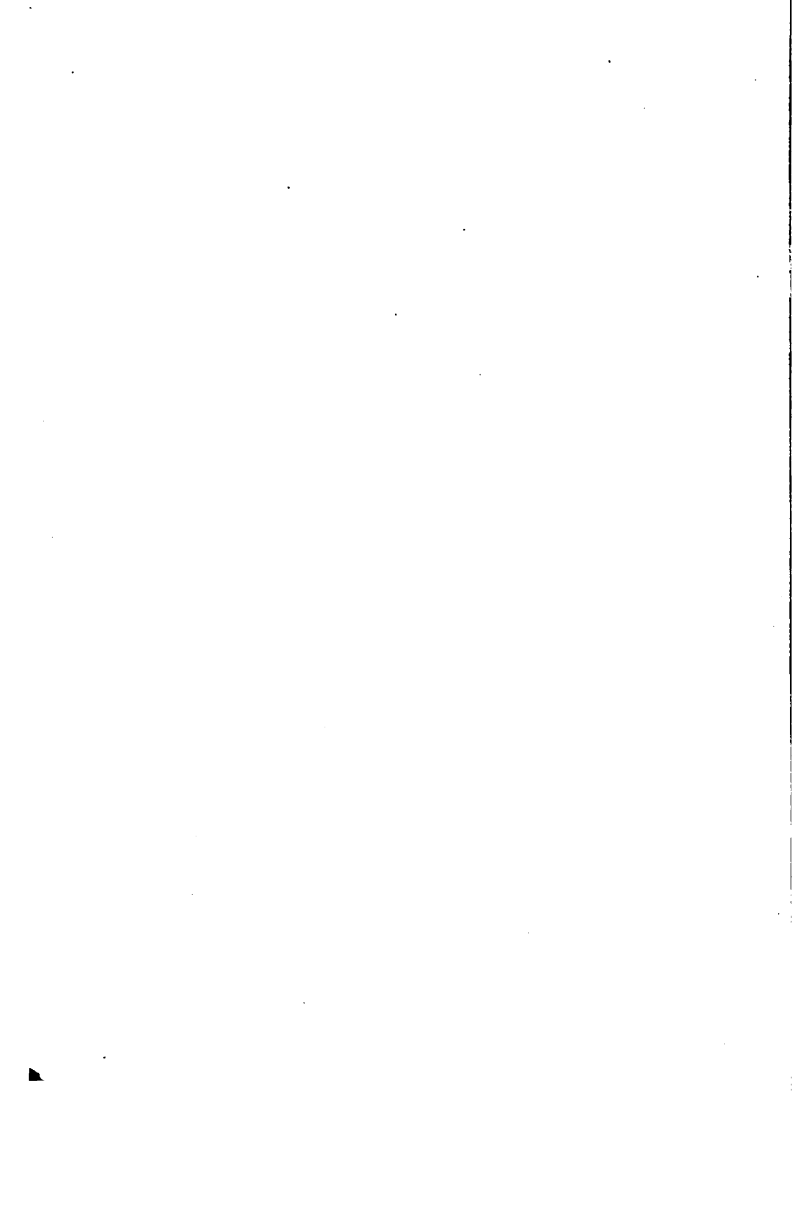
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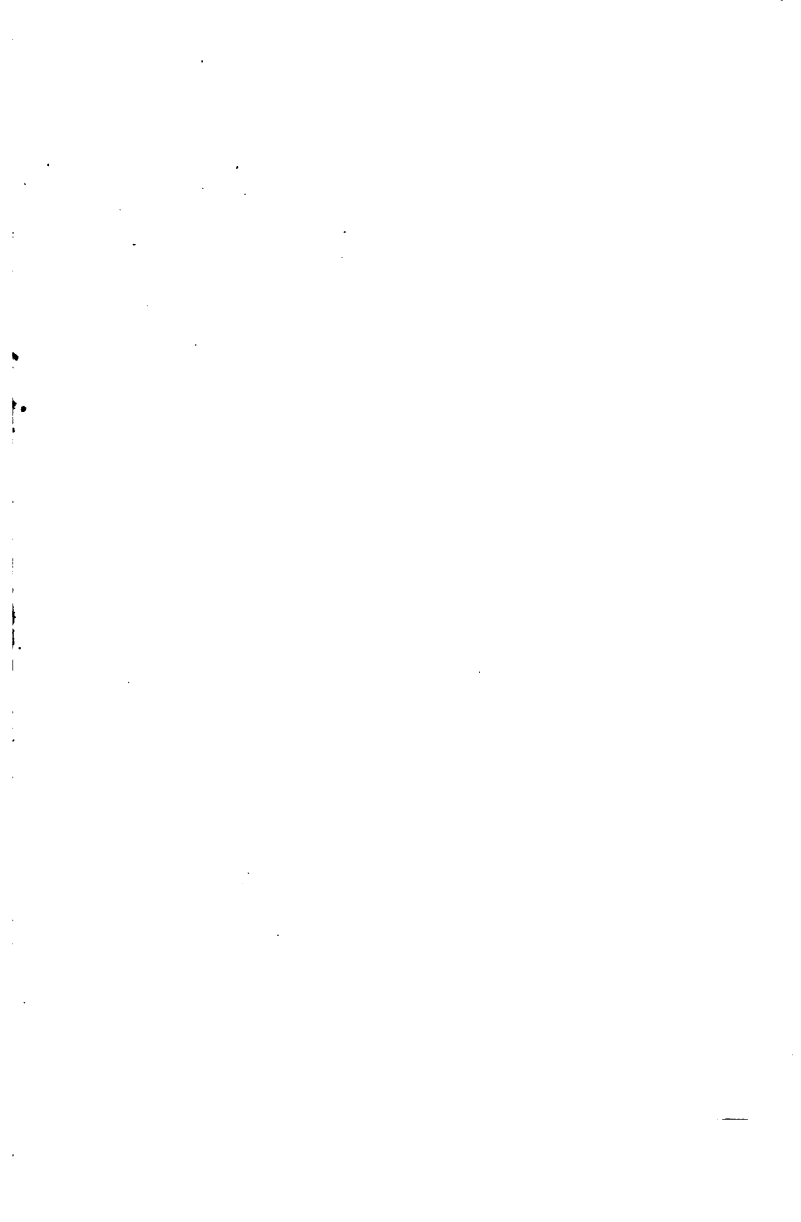


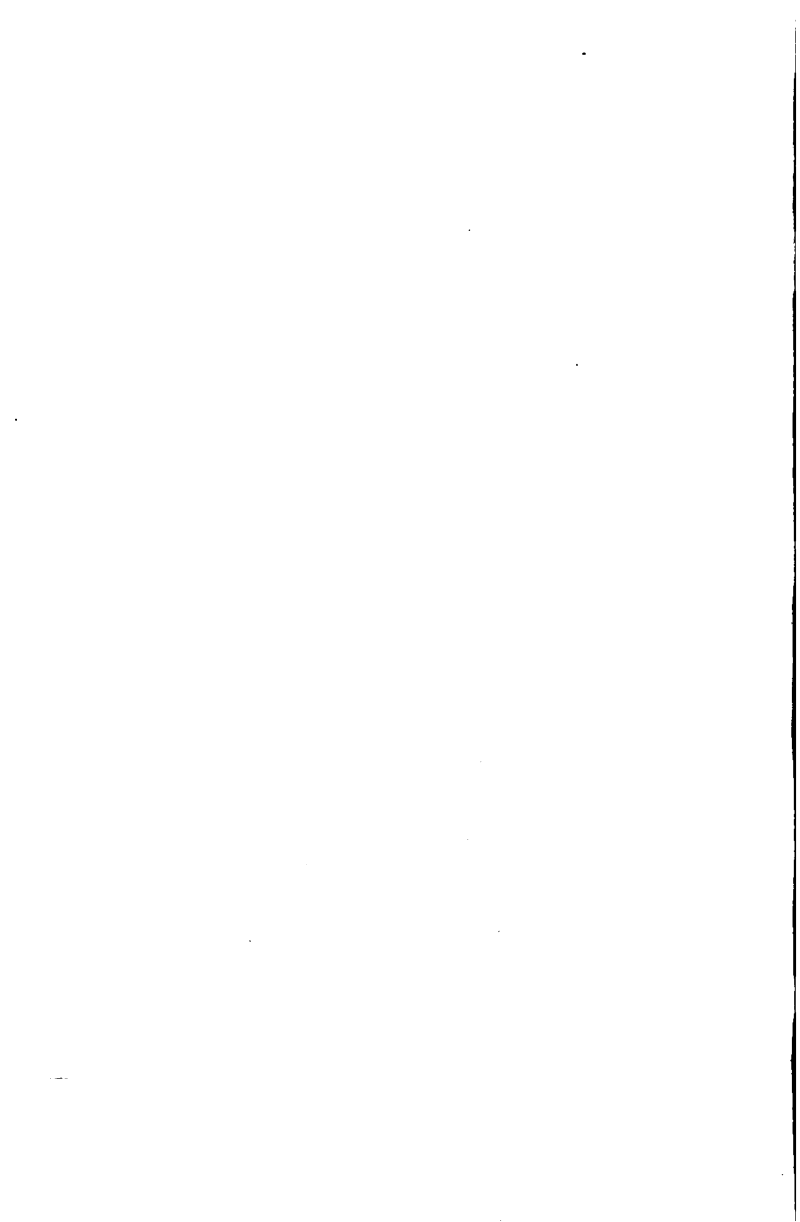
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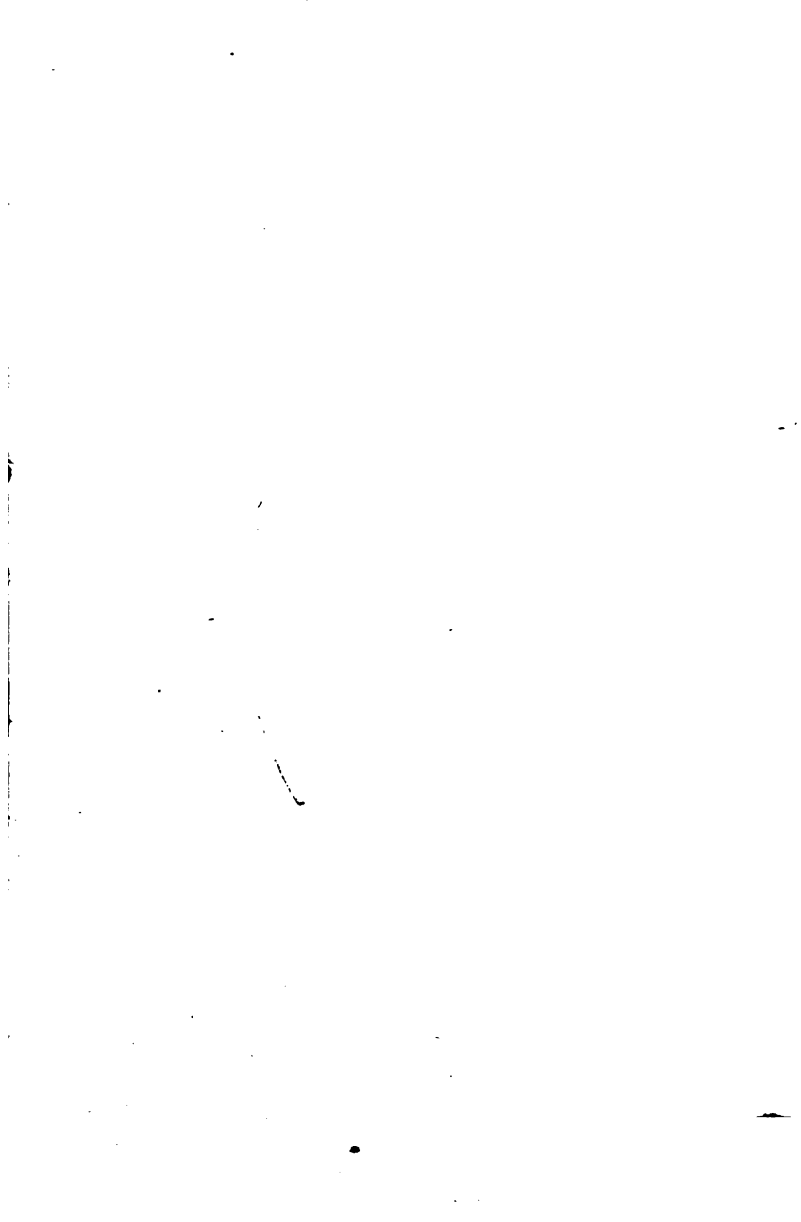








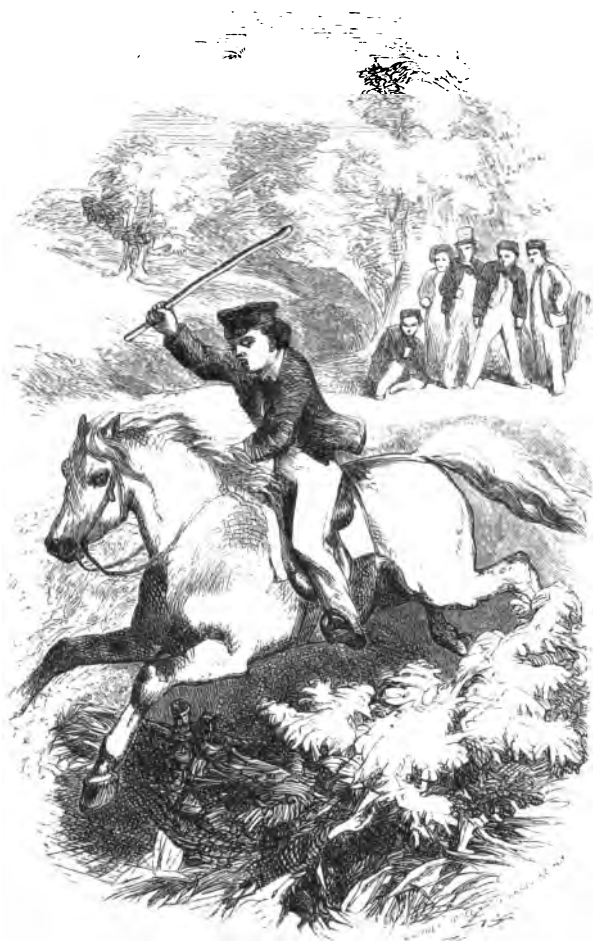




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HUGH RIDING THE PONY.

BOYS AT HOME.

BY
Christie
C. ADAMS,

AUTHOR OF "EDGAR CLIFTON," ETC. ETC.

In the exercise of the social virtues lies man's greatest happiness.
DR. SAM. JOHNSON.

Illustrated by John Gilbert.

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M.DCCC.LIV.



BOYS AT HOME.

CHAPTER I.

Dread desolation ! floods on floods appear
O'erwhelming with destructive power ;
High swelling waters gathering near
Foretell the terrors of each hour.
Contending winds with fury roar,
While urging on the torrent's force,
Their hollow voices o'er and o'er
Resound amidst its rapid course.

* * * * *

See fertile fields and lands o'erflowed,
And brightly blooming gardens lost ;
Where his rough hands their labour showed,
The industrious peasant's pride and boast.

ANON.

IT was on an evening at the commencement of the Christmas holidays that a family party were assembled in a spacious room in a comfortable house, standing in a retired village not far from a large commercial town in one of the midland counties.

The air was cold and piercing without, and dense clouds driving rapidly through the sky, foreboded a coming storm; the wind blew in hollow gusts, making the shelter of the substantial house doubly welcome. Lamps were burning brightly, and a large fire sent its cheering light through

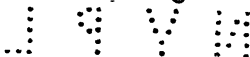
the apartment, lending a ruddier glow to the crimson curtains whose ample folds bid defiance to currents of air, and showing forth with increased brilliancy the polished mirrors and gilded pictures with which the room was adorned.

The present occupants of this pleasant room consisted of a gentleman and lady, their eldest daughter, a girl of thirteen, and five sons, whose ages varied from eight to fifteen.

The tea hour was past, and several younger children were gone off to bed ; while the three next boys in succession were allowed to sit up to a later hour than usual, in honour of the return from school of their two elder brothers.

Edward Gordon had been at a public school for two years, where he had conducted himself with perfect propriety, and had made great progress in his studies. Osmond, who was a year younger than his brother, had passed a year and a half at a smaller establishment, and had proceeded in every respect in as satisfactory a manner as his brother. They were now exhibiting with pride and pleasure the prizes that had been awarded them at the end of the half-year, and were receiving the best reward of all—the approving smiles and warm commendation of their parents, and the sympathy and admiration of their sister and younger brothers. There was much to tell, and many questions to be asked, of all that had occurred since the family had assembled together ; and they were in a state of great enjoyment, when a servant entered, and delivered a letter to his master, adding, that the messenger who brought it desired that it might be given to him directly.

Mr. Gordon felt unwilling at such a moment, to be



interrupted by a letter which he judged to be on no business of importance, but seeing the word "immediate" written on the envelope, he retired to the further end of the room, broke the seal, and read the contents. In a few moments the letter dropped to the ground, and clasping his hands together, he pressed them to his forehead, and leaned against the mantelpiece for support. Mrs Gordon, perceiving something was amiss, went up to her husband, and kindly leading him to the chair, picked up the letter, and seated herself beside him.

"Read it," said Mr. Gordon, pointing to the letter, and in a faint voice he added, "My poor wife and children, what a blow is this!"

Mrs. Gordon was much affected by the contents of the letter, but struggling for composure, she addressed a few soothing words to her husband, and they began conversing together in low tones, occasionally interrupted by exclamations of a painful nature.

In the mean time, the children, who were not aware of anything having occurred to interrupt the happiness of their parents, were chatting away in a lively manner. The two elder boys had much of their school employments and little adventures to relate, which were listened to with a mixture of pain and pleasure by Trevor, the fourth boy, who, it was decided, was to leave home as well as Allen, the third boy, the next half-year, and who had always expressed a great repugnance to the idea of school life, which distaste his parents and brothers had endeavoured to reason him out of. On the present occasion Edward had succeeded so well, that he had brought Trevor to confess, that as he was sure it was for his good, he should not mind going, and would even be cheerful under the thought

of leaving his dearly-loved home. Edward, pleased with the triumph he had attained, called out—

“ Papa, Trevor says he will like to go to school ! ”

Mr. Gordon, roused by his son's voice from his distressing contemplations, started, and turning round, encountered the animated looks of his children : shaking his head sorrowfully, he exclaimed, “ My poor boys, there will be no more school for any of you.”

“ No more school ! ” repeated Edward and Osmond, with surprise, not unmixed with much regret ; but quickly perceiving that something had greatly disturbed their father, they, with their sister and brothers, gathered around him, and Mr. Gordon communicated the source of his trouble ; namely, that he had just been informed by letter of the failure of a bank in which all his money was deposited.

Mr. Gordon had entered life at an early age, and by unwearied diligence and upright conduct in his profession, which was that of the law, he had prospered so well that he was able to retire from business with a good fortune sooner than is usual with the generality of men. As Mr. Gordon was the father of a large family, he might, perhaps, have longer continued the practice of his profession, had he not latterly fallen into a bad state of health, which his medical attendants ascribed to too great excitement and exertion, and warned him that if he did not seek retirement and repose from his labours, his life would probably be sacrificed. In accordance with this advice, Mr. Gordon disposed of his business, and removed to a delightful residence, in a little village not very far from Stoneleigh (the name by which we shall call the large town before alluded to), entering at the same time into a

stipulation, that he should not, if hereafter inclined, practise his profession within ten miles of that town.

At the time of the opening of this tale he had been in his present residence nine months; and in the enjoyment of repose, the cultivation of his taste for literature and the society of his wife and children, his health and strength were returning.

When Mr. Gordon had announced the loss of his fortune, and the necessary change of circumstances which it would involve, the children were all much concerned. The elder ones were able to comprehend pretty accurately the serious nature of the event, and not only for themselves but for their parents they deeply lamented it. But it was not till the younger boys had gathered from the ensuing conversations, that there would be none of the usual juvenile Christmas parties, and merrymaking, that they fully comprehended the misfortune that had befallen the family. Then indeed the event came so thoroughly home to them that they began to cry: indeed it is not certain that tears on this account did not gather in the eyes of the elder children, but the younger ones sobbed aloud.

"Poor boys!" said Mr. Gordon, as he kindly laid his hands on the heads of his little sons; "poor boys, this is but a trifle to the privations you will have to undergo; your education, your prospects in life——" Here emotions which he had long been struggling to suppress, so overcame the father, that he was unable to add another word, and turned away in order to strive to regain his wonted composure.

"Cheer up my children," said Mrs. Gordon, "happy days may yet be in store for you, and for us all; at any rate we must strive to think the best, and endeavour to do our duty under our trials."

"True, most true," said Mr. Gordon, again rejoining the family group. "In patiently bearing our afflictions, and in humble resignation to the Divine will we must find our consolation. And now let us reflect, and talk about what we have to do. In the first place this house must be given up, and we must seek for a far smaller one."

"Yes," said Mrs. Gordon, and then she and Mr. Gordon exclaimed at the same moment:

"The villa!" "Yes," continued he, "the villa, 'Myrtle Cottage' as it is called, must now be our home. How fortunate it is that Captain Grove would not give me the rent I asked for it. And how thankful may we now be that your little portion of a hundred and thirty pounds a year was settled on you at our marriage."

"Yes, my dear husband," said Mrs. Gordon, kindly; "you would do it, though I wished that on first setting out in life you should avail yourself of my small fortune—and I then little thought the blessing it might one day prove to us."

Mr. Gordon appeared for a few moments absorbed in thought; then as if struck anew with the magnitude of his loss, he exclaimed, "How will it be possible for such a large family as we are to subsist on a hundred and thirty pounds a year?"

"You must remember, my dear," said Mrs. Gordon, "that we shall have no rent to pay; besides which, there is a large garden attached to the house; and I think," continued she, looking at her sons, "I see before me several young gardeners who will not let it be neglected."

"Oh! yes, mamma;" exclaimed Edward, "I can dig and hoe and rake."

"And so can I—and I—and I," cried the other boys.

"And I too will help," said Helen.

"I am afraid, Helen," said her mother, "that you and I shall have too much in-door employment to allow of our being of much use in the garden; you know we shall have to part with our servants."

"Then I must be housemaid," said Helen, laughing; "I often, last summer, helped Mary to make some of the beds when Susan was unwell. I used to make her sit down while I took her place; at first she laughed at my awkwardness, but I got on well enough afterwards."

"Very well, little housemaid," said Mr. Gordon, smiling kindly on his daughter, "we will not let you work too hard."

"No," said Mrs. Gordon; "we must retain one servant, and that one must be Agnes."

"The German nurse?" said Mr. Gordon; "but I have heard you say, my dear, that except in the nursery she is of little use."

"That is true," replied Mrs. Gordon, "but still Agnes must remain with us till she can find the means of returning to her country, which she now again wishes to see. Poor young woman! she left her home to attend upon our children, when we were in distress for a nurse, and it is our duty to keep her with us as long as she wishes to stay. It is a great hindrance to her, her never having learned the English language."

"By the bye, Edward," said Mr. Gordon, "how prospers your friendship with Hans Steinberg, the young German whose father placed him at one of our public schools to learn among other things our language?"

"Quite well, papa," answered Edward; "in return for the pains I have taken with his English, he has taught me

the grammatical part of his language, of which, though I learned to speak fluently of Agnes, I knew little or nothing. But he leaves school this year; he is turned sixteen. He expects his father in England these holidays."

"Perhaps," said Mr. Gordon, "through his means we might find some way of Agnes reaching her native country in a desirable manner."

"I will write to Hans," said Edward.

The next subject that came under discussion was a very serious one—namely, whether sufficient funds could be raised for discharging the half-yearly bills; Mr. Gordon declaring that he would live on dry bread till they were all paid, and in this sentiment he was warmly seconded by his wife. The house was to be given up in March; till then, it was thought better that the family should remain where they were, as Myrtle Cottage was at present occupied by a tenant. Had this not been the case, moving in winter was very unpleasant; and no additional expense was incurred by staying at the larger house, as Mr. Gordon was under an obligation to retain it a year. He had originally stipulated with the owner that, at the expiration of that time, he should be at liberty either to purchase the mansion or give it up. The former course had already been decided upon, as it was found on trial to be a most desirable residence, being a large, well-built house, with extensive gardens and pleasure-grounds attached. The present occupiers had become fond of it, and had pleased themselves with projecting several little embellishments and improvements which were to give their favourite abode additional charms. Besides this, a large stock of handsome new furniture had been decided on, though it was not yet definitely ordered.

It was not one of the least painful parts of the change that had come over the family, their being obliged to leave a place they all liked so much. The children enumerated their various reasons for regret; with some it was their little gardens and their arbour, with others their tool-house and work-room. Edward, in particular, lamented his own small study, where he had arranged his books on shelves of his own contrivance; had made places for his desk; for two glass cases, the one containing the stuffed remains of a pet dog, with ears nearly as long as his body, and who was supposed to have come to its death by over-feeding, the other enclosing a large rat killed by the said pet, and a transparent bottle with a snake in spirits, a further proof of the dog's surprising powers of destructiveness; also boxes containing medals, coins, carpenters' tools, mathematical instruments, and sundry nick-nacks, all of great value to their possessor. Besides which, one or two paintings adorned the walls, and on the mantel-shelf stood two small busts, the one of Shakespeare, the other of Milton. In another part of the room, suspended from brass hooks, hung casts of legs, arms and feet, intended for models when the moment should arrive for practising the dry part of the art of drawing. There were two portfolios of prints, certainly not very rare or curious, but such as had at different times pleased the fancy of their young collector. A few favourite songs lay on a side table, some MS. music paper, with the beginnings of several popular airs written on them, and left unfinished for want of time or—patience; and, above all, standing in the middle of the centre table, was a concertina, an instrument which had been purchased for the poor youth during a long and painful confinement, arising from an accident that had happened to his leg three or four years ago.

As something has been hinted respecting a little want of patience on the part of Edward, it is but just to him to state that he not only persevered diligently in acquiring a tolerable degree of proficiency on his instrument, but after his recovery he continued the practice of it, never omitting to play daily, even if it was only for a very short time. He remembered his mother's words, when speaking of a young lady who neglected her music on the plea of having "no time."

"If," said she, "the half or the quarters of hours, or even the minutes, that are daily wasted, were bestowed upon the practice of some useful art or elegant accomplishment, a *possession* would be gained that might be turned to account, or might lessen the feelings of *ennui* that even the most energetic characters are at times subject to."

The task of daily practice was no doubt less irksome to Edward than it would have been to many, for he, in common with the rest of his family, was very fond of music; he inherited the correct ear and excellent taste of his parents. The thought of moving all his treasures brought his concertina and music to his mind, and he exclaimed:

"But what is to be done about the new grand piano-forte that papa promised Helen this Christmas?"

"The old one must do," said Mr. Gordon; "it is not a bad instrument, and Helen must make up for the disappointment by increased exertion. A little more correctness in the bass. Eh, Helen?"

"I will try to do my best," answered Helen, pleasantly; "and do you know, papa, mamma says I may begin to teach Fanny after Christmas, and she does wish so to learn."

"Well, then," said Mr. Gordon, cheered by the smiling countenance of his daughter, "we shall have another musician added to our orchestra. Let me see, Fanny is, I think, five years old," and he cast so droll a look at the children that they burst out laughing.

"We must all have a beginning," said Mrs. Gordon; "at any rate the thought of little Fanny's music has had one good effect; it has made us merry in the midst of our sorrow. And how happy we ought, too, to be, that neither the pianoforte nor any of the new furniture was yet ordered!"

"They never could have been paid for," said Osmond, gravely shaking his head.

"It would have been a sad business, indeed," said his father; "we may be very thankful we have not that weight on our minds. We have plenty of furniture to make the villa comfortable, and yet leave a good deal to sell towards paying the debts."

And then arose an animated discussion as to what should be retained, what parted with, each of the children naming some favourite articles that it would be "impossible to part with." Mr. Gordon advised them not to be too eager on the subject, for, after all, the choice must greatly depend upon what could be spared from the sum that must be raised to pay the half-yearly bills.

During the time the Gordon family had been learning the heavy loss they had sustained, and were occupied with conversation arising out of the distressing event, a violent storm had been raging. But so deeply occupied were they with the all-absorbing subject, that they paid no attention to what was passing without, except, indeed, when the crashing of a chimney-pot, or the rattle of falling

tiles, made some one of the party exclaim, "How high the wind is to-night!" But, at last, in a pause of the conversation, Mr. Gordon called out—

"Hark! what is that?"

Every one was silent, and a sound like the rushing of waters was heard.

"Merciful Heaven!" exclaimed Mr. Gordon, "it is the river; it has overflowed its bank, and is pouring down the village;" and starting up, he ran to the window, and throwing up the sash, looked out, exclaiming, "It is as I feared! the river is rushing down upon us, and we shall be flooded! The cellar," continued he, "perhaps there will be time to stop——" and with his sentence unfinished, Mr. Gordon hastened to see if the windows could be barred; but it was too late, for in a minute or two he returned, saying that nothing could be done, for the water was already half-way up the cellar stairs.

"It is well," said Mrs. Gordon, "that Mr. Vine had not yet sent the pipe of port; still, the beer and what else there is in the cellar, will be spoiled."

"It cannot be helped," replied Mr. Gordon; "all we have to hope is that the water will not rise to this floor."

"Shall we move out the furniture?" inquired some of the children, who were all watching with anxiety their father's countenance.

"We will wait a little," said Mr. Gordon, looking out of the window; "I almost hope it may not be necessary. Give me my cane, and I will hold it above the water, and see how much the flood increases. The lamp before the door will light me." But just at that moment a furious gust of wind extinguished the gas, the glass of the lamp having been previously broken by a falling tile.

"I will hold out the table lamp, papa," said Osmond.

"No, that is too heavy," cried Edward; "light the little side lamp."

"Be quick, boys," said Mr. Gordon; "I fear the water is rising fast."

The light was brought, and held out, and the stick suspended about two inches above the water.

For a few minutes the suspense was very painful, and the children pressed forward to gaze out, each young head striving to gain a view.

"I do not think the water rises," exclaimed Edward, after having stretched himself to the utmost to lean out of the window.

"I, too, am in hope that it does not," said Mr. Gordon. "I will now lower the cane so as just to touch the water, and we shall then be able to tell how much it rises, or if happily it begins to subside."

After another short space of time the cane was drawn in and examined. It was not wet; and to the scrutinising eyes of Edward it soon became evident that the flood was sinking.

"Thank God!" exclaimed Mrs. Gordon; and in this devout feeling she was heartily joined by all present.

CHAPTER II.

And even if misfortunes come,
Be thankful for them yet,
They give the wit of age to youth,
They let us ken oursel;
They make us ken the naked truth,
The real good and ill.

Though losses and crosses
Be lessons right severe,
There's wit there, ye'll get there,
Ye'll find no other where.

BURNS.

MR. and Mrs. Gordon did not sleep much that night. Their thoughts were too fully occupied with the great change in their circumstances, both as regarded themselves, and more especially as affecting the future prospects of their children, to permit of their enjoying any great degree of repose. To promote the welfare and happiness of their offspring was the great end and aim of these careful parents' lives, and it was with heartfelt concern that they contemplated the injury they would sustain. Already were their two eldest boys well advanced in learning, and bid fair to get on well in the world, could the means hitherto pursued respecting their education have been continued. And their younger ones, all with good abilities and a desire to learn—what was to be done with them? how could they ever hope to be established in life? It was grievous to think of, especially as regarded the five elder boys; the others were still in the nursery, or had not long left it.

A gloom he could not shake off seemed to fix itself on Mr. Gordon's mind; at the same time he struggled hard for composure, and feeling the necessity of exertion, he

rose early, and went down to see if anything could be saved from the havoc that had been made in the cellar by the storm of the preceding evening, and also to look to other matters that needed his attention.

The children, too, on this same morning rose with an unwonted heaviness on their hearts. Allen and Trevor went to the schoolroom to communicate the sad tidings to Harry and Willie, who were gambolling about in the joyous expectation of a visit from the two elder boys, who were very kind to the younger ones, and often entertained them with amusing histories of what they had done and seen since they last met. They immediately became silent and concerned; and even the little ones in the nursery, with Fanny at their head, hushed for a time their noisy play upon her telling them that "poor papa and mamma were unhappy."

Every one looked dull and out of spirits; and the breakfast hour, generally so cheerful and happy a time with the elder children, who partook of that meal with their parents, was passed in almost entire silence. Edward and Osmond felt this contrast strongly between this and their previous holidays; they missed the lively conversation and improving remarks that were wont to give a charm to this social repast; but above all they missed the kind interest and sympathy in all their little projects and plans of recreation and amusement for the vacation, which their father and mother had hitherto always evinced.

But it was not for themselves alone that Edward and Osmond felt; they looked at Allen and Trevor, who were just of an age to feel greatly the disadvantages of the change in the plan of their education, and at their gentle sister, whose eyes were heavy with weeping, not for her

own, but for the sorrows of others. Their mother's pensive look, and the sigh which occasionally escaped her, reminded them how much more heavily the blow must fall upon her than on themselves. But of all the party assembled round the breakfast-table, their father most particularly arrested their attention. They had never seen him so cast down before ; he neither spoke to nor looked at any one, and his countenance wore an expression of deep dejection. At length, when the uncomfortable repast was over, Mr. Gordon roused himself, and shaking off as it were with effort the weight that oppressed him, he walked to the windows, and looking out said, "I fear the storm of last night must have done a great deal of mischief; I will go and take a survey of what has happened."

While Mr. Gordon was absent from home, Mrs. Gordon called together the servants, and announcing to them the reverse of fortune which had taken place, said that she should be obliged to dismiss them from her service. This information was received with regret by most of the servants, for they had an indulgent master and mistress, and were very happy in their service. Agnes, too, was at the same time told of the kind consideration that would be shown her, for which the young foreigner expressed herself grateful.

Mrs. Gordon then had all the children brought to her in the breakfast-room, in order to afford the servants better opportunity for making preparations for their departure; and she occupied herself, with the help of Helen, in giving to the younger children a portion of the instruction they were in the daily habit of receiving. While thus employed, Mr. Gordon returned from the survey he had been making out of doors; but he was no longer like the

same man. His countenance was serene and happy ; he cast an affectionate look at his wife, and smiling kindly on all, took up the youngest children in his arms and caressed them. He then drew a chair into the midst of the group, and with a child on each knee and others standing up behind him clinging round his neck, he proceeded to give an account of what he had seen.

The devastation caused by a river overflowing its banks and pouring with violence through a village and over the surrounding country, is pretty generally known to be of a very serious nature, but seldom has it happened that so much mischief is done as in the present instance. Mr. Gordon described the effects of the storm to be of the most distressing character. Cottages had been nearly destroyed, the produce of the little gardens swept away, and pigs, poultry and sheep drowned in the overwhelming flood. Most painful was it to hear the cries and lamentations of the poor souls on beholding the destruction of their little property. In many cases the lives of the poor inhabitants had been saved with difficulty ; and it was feared that some of the older people would not survive the alarm and drenching they had undergone. This sad history was listened to with deep concern, and Mr. Gordon was frequently interrupted by questions from his elder sons and his daughters respecting the fate of those among the villagers in whom they were particularly interested ; more especially the boys desired to know what had befallen an old couple of the name of Jarvis, whose cottage they were in the habit of frequently visiting, and whose grandson, a fine young sailor, was a particular favourite with the boys.

The account of these poor people was sad indeed ;

they appeared to have suffered more than almost any of their neighbours. Jarvis lived in a cottage, which with a small garden had been left him by his father, who had once been in more prosperous circumstances. Little now remained of the cottage besides the bare walls. The entire thatch had been blown down, and part of the roofing carried away by the hurricane that swept over it. The garden was laid bare; all the young trees and winter plants with which their grandson had stocked it were washed away; and worst disaster of all, not only was the pig-stye destroyed, but the fine fat pig, ready to be killed, carried away and drowned. The lamentations of the poor old man and woman were described by Mr. Gordon to be most grievous to hear; it was in vain that they were reminded that their lives had been spared: they said it would have been better if they had been swept away with the flood rather than left to pine on in want and misery. "And what adds additional bitterness to their sorrow," continued Mr. Gordon, "is that their grandson is gone to sea; had he been with them, they keep repeating; had Matthew but been here, something might be done; but now there is nothing for us but to lie down and die!"

"Poor souls!" exclaimed Edward and Osmond almost in a breath, "we will help them. Oh! papa, give us some money, and let us run with it to them directly, and ——" the boys stopped short, for the recollection of their own fallen fortunes flashed across their minds, and they sorrowfully added, "no, we cannot give them money."

"We will do what we can," said Mr. Gordon, "for our poor, distressed neighbours, and I am happy to say that a subscription is already on foot, to which I have contributed a sovereign. In our present circumstances, that is

all I feel justified in giving. I must consider the wants of my own family first. I am thankful to God to be able to give even that," continued he, devoutly. "What a lesson of content and gratitude have I learned since I went out! I have seen those who have lost their all, and the cries of the poor creatures who are left wholly destitute still ring in my ears. How different is my fate from theirs. Compared with them I am rich: I have still a comfortable home, with enough to support life, and even in some instances to lend it an elegance and refinement. I humbly hope that no further repining will ever escape my lips." Mr. Gordon paused, then looking round upon his family, he said, "It is only for my wife and children that I shall now ever deplore our loss of fortune; but, I trust, with Divine assistance, we shall yet do well."

"Do not think of me, my dear," exclaimed Mrs. Gordon, with emotion. "If I am blessed with the affection of my husband and children, and see our young ones grow up good and happy, I shall have all I want, and all I care to live for."

As Mrs. Gordon said this, the elder children gathered round her, and tenderly kissing her, assured her they would strive all in their power to become what she wished. Fanny, too, who was sitting at Mrs. Gordon's feet, laid aside her work, and clasping her mother's knees, looked up in her face, and said with great earnestness of manner, "Mamma, I will help you all I can." Even the very little children seemed to catch an idea of what was going on, and lisped out "I good boy:" "I good boy."

After a time the conversation reverted to the poor villagers, and a rough calculation was formed as to the number of sufferers, and what each individual could hope to receive of the sum of money collected for their benefit.

"But, papa," said Edward, "even if the sum is as large as you think it probably will be, divided among so many, how very little will come to each."

"The poor Jarvises," said Osmond, "cannot hope to have anything like the value of what they have lost restored to them."

"Indeed they cannot," replied Mr. Gordon; "and that makes it so much to be regretted that their grandson is away from them at such a time. The poor old woman kept repeating, 'If Matthew were but here, *he* would help them; *he* would cover in their cottage for them, *he* would thatch the roof, *he* would build up the chimney. Oh! he was so clever, and so good!'"

Much more was said of the deplorable effects of the storm, and of the best way of assisting the destitute, but Edward and Osmond ceased to take any further share in the conversation; indeed, they appeared not even to listen to what was said; and after a time they began conversing together in low tones, when starting up they asked permission to go into the village to witness the ravages made by the storm, and to pay a visit to the Jarvises.

The request was granted, and Mr. Gordon said that later in the day he would take out Helen and some of the younger boys, that they might also see what had happened.

Edward and Osmond lost no time in preparing for their wet walk, and while thus engaged, Edward exclaimed—

"It is a capital thought of yours, Osmond, to help the Jarvises ourselves, as we have no money to give them."

"The same thing struck you," said Osmond.

"No," replied Edward, "I cannot claim any merit in that respect; all I thought of was to go and look if there

was anything to be picked up where the waters had subsided. But now you have put it into my head, I am sure I can be of use ; I can replace their roof, for one thing. You remember I learned to thatch at the good-natured farmer's where we were sent in the summer when the fever broke out in our village."

"I remember," said Osmond ; "and I learned a thing or two there myself, which may turn to account at the present time. Now let us be off ; I am impatient to see what can be done for these poor people."

As the waters had now subsided several hours, the boys met with no obstruction in their path, except an occasional fallen tree, or now and then a large splash of water which still remained on some of the lowest ground, and over which they were obliged to leap : but their progress was frequently arrested to gaze at and lament over the traces of ruin and destruction which met their view on every side. Pursuing their way along the main road for about a quarter of a mile, they turned into some meadows, which ascended by a gentle slope to a small farm-house, the kind owner of which had given temporary shelter to many of his poorer neighbours, who, with what few articles they could save from the flood, had fled to him in their distress.

When Edward and Osmond entered Farmer Maydew's kitchen, they found it occupied by several poor women and children, whose fathers and husbands were employed in trying to save something more of their little property from the general wreck. At first the boys did not perceive the Jarvises, for the old man was looking out from the casement window at the dreary prospect before him, and his wife was sitting at the far end of the chimney-

corner, her head bowed down, and her face covered with her hands.

The boys offered such consolation to the old couple as was in their power, telling them how much concerned they were for the misfortune that had overtaken them, and offering to do anything they could to assist them. They encouraged them to take a less desponding view of their circumstances, saying that perhaps things might turn out better than was expected, and that they themselves were going to the cottage, to take a look and see how far it was possible to repair the damage, and would return and make a report on the subject. Jarvis appeared to pay some attention to what was said; but the poor old woman sat in a state of apathy. It seemed as though the shock she had sustained had stupified her faculties.

Several of the cottages in the village had stood on low ground, but the one inhabited by the Jarvises was in a particularly bad situation for feeling the effects of the late calamity. Shut in at the back and sides by hills, it was sheltered from cold winds, and its sunny aspect, clumps of evergreens, and gaily blooming flower-beds, looked in the summer months, and even on bright days in winter, a cheerful, pretty residence. Its inhabitants had not been without occasional fears that they might some time or other sustain damage by the swelling of the waters; but as no injury had hitherto been done, save now and then the washing of the lower part of their little garden, they were far from anticipating such fearful ravages as had been made on their property by the storm of the preceding night.

Arrived at the spot, Edward and Osmond stood for some time silently gazing at the scene of desolation that

lay before them. Entrance to the house seemed impossible, for it was surrounded, and the lower part apparently overflowed with a pool of muddy water left by the river in its headlong course.

"What a sad change!" at last exclaimed Edward; "I should not have known the place."

"No," replied his brother; "and where are the two tall elms that stood in the hedgerow at the back of the cottage, 'Matthew and Sarah,' as the old people used fondly to call them, after their two grand-children?"

"Rooted up by the tempest, no doubt," answered Edward; "but I wish we could get in and see if there is nothing we could save of the poor souls' property; perhaps there might be something or other floating about in the water that we could rescue. You see the brickwork around the lower part of the house, and a good deal of the boarding, still remains."

"We should be over knees in mud," said Osmond, "were we to make the attempt at present. I fear so, at least; but," added he, a moment or two after, "let us consider, and try if we cannot find the means of getting in from behind; the ground lies higher there than it does in front. A stepping-stone or two would serve us greatly could we meet with them."

As the brothers stood pondering on the best mode of proceeding, their attention was attracted by a man who appeared on the opposite side, emerging, as it were, from the ruined building, and creeping along under the hedgerow, as though he wished to avoid observation. They watched him passing along one or two meadows, till he came to an opening in the fence, through which he made his way, and then by aid of a pollard willow, which had

been torn up and fallen across the stream, he passed into the road, and pursued his way.

"That will do for us," exclaimed Edward; "we cannot do better than follow that man's plan;" and running down the road, he and Osmond crossed over the willow bridge, made their way along the fields, and arrived at the back of Jarvis's cottage. Here a new impediment arrested their progress, in the shape of the two tall elms, which they had previously missed, lying prostrate beside the back entrance to the house. They had been blown down by the hurricane of the preceding night, and had just escaped crushing the house in their fall, their top branches only having pulled down part of the chimney, and carried away those parts of the thatched roof which had not been blown off by the wind. After some little difficulty, the boys scrambled over the trees, and effected their entrance into the remains of the cottage. Arrived there, their first object was to ascertain the amount of damage that had been done, and to see if anything could be saved from the wreck.

The ground-floor was still under water, but an attentive examination proved that the work of destruction had not been so complete as was at first anticipated. It is true that the roof had been swept away, and the sides of the building much damaged, but the stairs and the flooring of the upper rooms were left nearly entire; while the trees, the loss of which the boys had so much deplored, had proved of great service in stopping a large part of the boarding of the cottage, and several articles of furniture, from being swept away with the flood. Jarvis's arm-chair, a table, the old woman's washing-tub, a pail, together with sundry other useful household articles, were espied entan-

gled in the protecting branches of the sturdy trees. Up stairs matters wore as promising an appearance as could possibly have been expected. The chimney had fallen on the old couple's bed, and by the weight of the brickwork had prevented the bed from being carried away by the flood, which had evidently poured through the room. And by the same lucky chance, a box, containing the wearing apparel and other property of the old people, had been saved; for, though forced by the tide up to the bed, its farther progress was arrested by the heavy weight opposed to it.

The boys were rejoiced to find matters thus far well; still the prospect was sufficiently discouraging—everything was covered with dirt, and completely soaked through with water, and as they gazed up through the roofless tenement at the black and threatening sky, and contemplated the heaps of rubbish piled on the bed, and round about, they almost feared that their strength would not be sufficient to enable them to repair the damage, so as to make the cottage again habitable for their poor old friends. They descended the stairs in silence, neither liking to communicate his thoughts to the other, and stood for some time looking out from the back part of the house. In a short time they discovered, half-concealed by the mud, a tin can, used for holding water, and then another and another useful article was seen strewed around. The courage of the boys revived at the sight, and Edward exclaimed,

“Capital service have the ‘Matthew and Sarah’ done! They have been a net to catch all the stray furniture floating in the stream.”

“And look here,” said Osmond, in the same cheerful tone; “here is the young sailor’s room almost free from damage.”

The room alluded to was on the ground-floor ; it was small, but contained a bed, a table, and chair, and was set apart for the use of Matthew whenever he came home from sea. It had been in a great measure spared from the fiercest violence of the storm by its being in a more sheltered position, and by the walls of that part of the cottage being thicker than the rest. The bed and bedding had, of course, been washed by the flood, but, with the table and chair, were still left in the room.

The boys consulted together, and their spirits rose, as they settled that it would be possible for them, in process of time, to make the lower part of the cottage habitable for the old people. They agreed that Matthew's room might be used as a temporary bed-room, and that they could soon bring in and clean the various articles of furniture which now lay strewed about outside the house. They planned that a large fire could be made, to dry the bedding and the walls of the cottage, while they repaired those parts where the boarding had been forced up. The door, they thought, could soon be replaced on its hinges, but the windows—there arose a great difficulty ; the glass was all shivered to atoms, and how would it be possible to admit light, and at the same time exclude the cold air. At last they determined that the shutter of the back window could be kept closed, and a cloth hung over the other, stout enough for warmth, and yet not too thick to obscure the light ; this, at any rate, might do till the means were found of restoring the panes of glass. Having arrived at these satisfactory conclusions, they hastened off to make their report to the Jarvises.

On re-entering Farmer Maydew's kitchen, where the brothers had left the old couple, they found it in a complete

uproar. A waggon had just arrived to convey the sufferers by the late storm to the Union, permission having been obtained for receiving them there for a time. Some of the poor women were thankful for the refuge thus afforded them in their distress ; some grumbled, and spoke of the hardships of being sent to a workhouse, still they consented to go, all of them ; except Mrs. Jarvis, who, now quite roused from the semi-conscious state in which she had lately been, was loudly vociferating that she never would go ; nothing should ever induce her to enter a workhouse.

"It is no use talking and trying to persuade me, go I will not," she screamed out as loud as she could, whenever an attempt was made to reason with her. Jarvis stood aloof, the idea of going to the Union was as painful to him as to his wife, but he said nothing ; yet the manner in which he pressed his hands together, and the heavy sighs he heaved from time to time, showed how much he felt. Still, when the good farmer represented that he had a family to maintain, and that it was impossible he could keep them, the old man bowed his head in token of resignation, and was about to speak to his wife, when the boys returned.

Edward and Osmond soon learned how matters stood, and they entered warmly into the feelings of the old couple at the thought of being sent away from their home, and they were full of their own plans for speedily reinstating them there. They told Farmer Maydew of their scheme, and entreated him to let Jarvis and his wife remain at his house, till the cottage was ready for their reception.

The farmer listened respectfully to all the boys had to say ; but when they had pleaded their cause, he shook his

head, and said it would never do ; it was quite out of the question that two young gentlemen of their age could repair the cottage, or were it possible, it would require a far longer time than he could afford to keep the Jarvises. Edward urged that in this case they should not work as though they were gentlemen, but labour with all their might to achieve their end, and he reminded the farmer how he had one day helped to thatch his stacks when he was afraid bad weather was coming to spoil them.

Maydew smiled goodnaturedly, but he said there was a great difference between working in play and working in earnest, and reminded the boys that they were unused to labour.

Osmond said he should soon see how much they were in earnest ; " besides," he added, " you could let your son Joe help us, and Jarvis himself would work."

Still the farmer remained unpersuaded, and Edward, perceiving that their scheme must be given up, turned sorrowfully to his brother and said, " This is the first sad beginning of having no money."

Edward meant these words only for his brother's ear, but Maydew heard them, and lowering his voice and speaking with great kindness, he said, " I fear, then, Master Gordon, the bad news I heard up town this morning is true."

" You mean my father's loss of fortune, I suppose ? " said Edward. " Yes, Farmer Maydew, it is quite true. We have very little left for ourselves or for others."

Maydew was a kindhearted man, but he was also prudent, and his farm was a small one and not over productive ; he had sustained losses and injury by a man

whose land joined his. This man had been to law with him more than once; and it was owing to Mr. Gordon's skill and kindness that he had been saved much expense, and the suits brought to a favourable termination. Maydew always entertained a grateful sense of the benefits thus conferred on him, and he had often wished for an opportunity of evincing his gratitude. It now struck him that an occasion offered of obliging the sons of him who had done him essential service, by granting their petition; at the same time he should perform a benevolent action towards two poor souls whose misfortune and distress of mind he had not witnessed unmoved.

After meditating a little while, he said, "But where will you find straw for thatching, Master Gordon?"

"Oh, you will give us some, Farmer Maydew," exclaimed Osmond.

"Give you straw, too!" repeated Maydew.

"You know father," said Joe, a stout lad of sixteen, the farmer's eldest son, "there is that mildewed straw that you said would never turn to much good."

At this moment, the man who was to drive the waggon put his head in at the door and called out, "Come, good people, are you ready? I cannot wait any longer."

"You need not wait," said Maydew. "This old couple shall remain with me for a week, and in that time we will see what we can do for them."

At this announcement a shout of joy broke forth from Edward and Osmond. Jarvis, in low, tremulous tones, breathed forth his thanks; and his poor wife, overcome with the various feelings she had recently gone through, burst into tears and wept like a child.

After these various emotions of the different parties

had somewhat subsided, the boys made a statement of the condition in which they found the cottage, and which was listened too with deep attention by those most interested in the subject. When the report was finished, Jarvis inquired, with much anxiety, if the young gentlemen had seen his watch, which was left hanging over the mantelshelf, and which, in his hurry to escape from the rising flood, he had forgotten to snatch off the hook from which it was suspended. The boys replied that they had not observed it, but that they would look for it on their return to the cottage, which would be directly they had been home and asked permission of their parents to follow out their plan."

"And, Master Gordon," cried the old woman, as the brothers were hastening off, "do look if you can see anything of my new bonnet, my Sunday bonnet, that Sarah made and sent me. I had it out and was looking at it, just as my good man called to me to hasten down or we should be drowned. Dear, dear, I never was so frightened in my life! And my nice new bonnet; what shall I do? Do look and see if you can find it!"

The boys could scarcely refrain from laughter at the poor old woman's fears and anxiety concerning her bonnet, especially when they recollected the scene of confusion and desolation they had just come from; but as regarded the watch it appeared to them a more serious affair, and as they pursued their walk home, they spoke of the probability of recovering it, when Edward exclaimed, "It has just struck me that that man whom we saw creeping away from the cottage as we came up to it, has probably stolen the watch."

"Very likely," replied Osmond; "I thought at the time that he was there for no good."

"It will be well for us to keep watch," said Edward, "or we shall have the things we are going to take so much pains in bringing in and cleaning carried off."

"Some one must sit up all night in the cottage," suggested Osmond; "I wonder if Papa will consent to our doing so?"

"There he is coming to meet us," exclaimed Edward; "let us run and ask him, first telling him all we want to do."

Mr. Gordon entered fully into the kind feeling that actuated his sons, and commended their wish to be of use to their poor neighbours; but, like Farmer Maydew, he expressed serious doubts as to their capability of performing a task which appeared so much beyond the powers of lads of their age. Still he felt reluctant to refuse his consent to what his boys so earnestly desired, especially as he knew that the change in his circumstances must necessarily abridge them, these holidays, of much of their accustomed enjoyment; he therefore, after a little reflection, said, that if they could obtain their mamma's permission, he would not withhold his.

Mrs. Gordon's consent was obtained even more readily than that of either of the other parties interested in the matter. She had endeavoured to inspire her children with a proper spirit of independence, and a desire to make themselves useful whenever an opportunity offered; and she never felt better pleased than when they were performing some act of kindness towards those who stood in need of assistance. In the present case, she felt the difficulty of her children's self-imposed task, and thought it more than probable that a failure would ensue; but she applauded the good feeling that had prompted them to the

undertaking, and advised them, if they once begun, to persevere steadily with their work. She likewise advised prudence, and cautioned them against over-exertion.

To their other request, of being allowed to keep guard all night in the cottage, a positive refusal was given; neither could their humble friend Joe, to whom they afterwards communicated their doubts and fears as to the safety of the old couple's goods and chattels, persuade his father to let him not only lose his natural rest, but pass many hours exposed to the cold and damp of such a dilapidated building.

CHAPTER III.

"The wise and active conquer difficulties,
By daring to attempt them."

Rowe.

THE wished-for permission being obtained, the next thing to be considered by the boys was, not to spoil their clothes. Under all circumstances, this would have been desirable, but now care and economy had become matters of necessity. Too much attention directed to this object, Edward and Osmond felt, would greatly impede their progress, and check the activity of their operations, and they were consulting with their mamma on the best way of proceeding, when Osmond remembered two over-coats, which had been considered too shabby for himself and his brother to wear the previous winter. On inquiry, these coats were found not to have been given away, and the boys hastened off, and soon dragged them to light; but on fitting them on, Edward found that he was so much grown that he could not thrust his arms into the sleeves, and the skirts hardly reached to his knees. Osmond had equally outgrown his

coat, but he could wear his brother's very well ; but then what could Edward do ? Out of this dilemma they were happily helped, by finding in the drawer that contained their own coats one of Mr. Gordon's, which had been laid by for the same reason as their own, and which their papa, on being asked, gave them leave to have. The only objection was that Mr. Gordon's coat was as much too large for Edward as his own was too small ; but then it was soon settled that it would be very easy to cut part of it away, so as to make it fit, if Helen would be so good as to undertake the alteration.

There was no difficulty about this part of the business, their kind sister being ever ready to enter into her brothers' projects, and assist them in any way in which she was able. Helen only felt doubtful of her powers to cut the coat to advantage ; and it was agreed to call in the assistance of a nurse who had lived some time in the family, and who presumed not a little on the importance of her situation, and the consciousness that she was both very clever and very useful.

But unluckily, this *great* personage was subject to fits of ill-humour, under an attack of which she was labouring at the moment application was made to her for her services by her young mistress and masters, and she refused to lend her aid. In vain the boys entreated ; she turned a deaf ear, saying she was too busy to attend to them, she had a great deal too much to do, and added, that she never heard of such nonsense as two young gentlemen going to build up a cottage. The boys were much vexed, but Helen told them not to mind, and she would do as well as she could without assistance ; and getting Edward to put on the coat, she began to pin it in, to fit his figure, he from time to

time begging her to make haste, and reminding her that in these short winter days there was so little time to do all they had to do, when the nurse exclaimed,—

“Why don’t you wear a belt, Master Gordon, round your waist? Then the coat would sit tight enough, and with the sleeves taken in, and the skirts cut shorter, you need do nothing more.”

“Oh! that’s it, that’s it! Work away, dear Helen,” exclaimed Edward, delighted at the prospect of so speedily having his coat made wearable. “Thank you, nurse, thank you!”

And nurse, gratified with the pleasure she had given, or perhaps from some better motive, took the coat out of the young lady’s hands, saying, at the same time,

“I will cut it; and you, Miss Helen, can do one side while I do the other.”

Fanny being employed to thread needles, the work proceeded so rapidly that it was soon finished, and the boys were off on their errand of charity almost as soon as their impatience led them to desire. Jarvis was to accompany them to the cottage to superintend their work; indeed, he said he thought he could be of assistance in bringing in some of the things which the young gentlemen told him were lying strewed about, and Joe the brothers also hoped would go with them; but they were disappointed, for on arriving at the farm they found the old man suffering under a violent attack of rheumatism in his knees, and unable to move, and Joe could not by any possibility be spared till late in the afternoon. There was nothing, therefore, to be done but to trust to their own exertions, and they reminded each other, as they bent their steps towards the cottage, that they had at first never thought of having any one else to help.

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THE BUILDING OF THE COTTAGE.

On reaching their place of destination, they set to work with an energy and activity that promised well for the achievement of their purpose. After occupying themselves for a long time in bringing in the scattered articles of furniture, and hunting about in every direction to pick up all they could find, it struck them that if they did not hasten to make such repairs as were in their power, daylight would leave them before they had rendered the cottage in some measure secure from the attack of thieves.

The first thing to be done was to sort out from the heaps of rubbish and broken masses of the building for such parts of the boarding as would fit the different breaches in the walls. This was a difficult and tedious task, and when the young workmen had in part accomplished it, they remembered that they had omitted to provide themselves with hammer and nails. Here was an unlucky discovery ! To go home for them would occupy so much time ; and even if they could be procured from the farm, it would not be much better, owing to the heavy state of the ground they would have to pass and repass ; and then there was the door, too, to get upon its hinges. That being an absolute necessity, the boys began striving with all their might to replace the door, frequently repeating, as they proceeded, that they feared all would be too late, and how unlucky they were to have omitted bringing proper tools with them.

In the midst of their toil, hurry, and exclamations, the brothers chanced to look up the road, and their attention became riveted on seeing a small figure, with exceedingly long legs, which was advancing towards them with rapid strides, and in a few seconds the well-known cheerful voice of Allen called out

"Well done, *workmen*! You are making the most of your time, I perceive. I am come to see if I can be of any service to you. Mounted on my stilts, I will be an Ariel to you; and though I cannot fly through the air, I can pass over the ground at a rapid pace, and I am here to do your biddings."

This welcome offer was gladly accepted, and Allen was quickly despatched for hammer and nails, a gimlet being added to the list of wants. No time was lost in questioning Allen then as to his opportune arrival, but his brothers learned afterwards that he, assisted by a servant, had spent the morning in constructing a pair of stilts, thinking that they would carry him high and dry over places where he otherwise should not be able to go. This boy had a mechanical turn, and it was his great delight to work at his papa's lathes, and with a set of carpenter's tools of his own, to make little boxes, picture-frames, and even book-shelves for his own and his brothers' rooms. He was agile and quick in his movements, and he speedily executed his errand. Edward and Osmond would have been glad to have him help them; but he had been told that he was not to assist farther than going on messages. When he had delivered up the hammer, gimlet, and the nails, of which he had brought an abundant supply, he peeped in at the cottage door, and exclaimed with surprise at the number of things collected in the room, saying he did not think the old people were worth so much, and added that he thought his brothers had been very diligent.

Edward replied that they had not lost their time; and he and Osmond were rejoiced to have recovered so many articles; but he added, as he began rapping vigorously at a piece of board he had just fitted into a hole in the wall,

that he feared all their labour would be of no avail, for it would be impossible to make the cottage secure before it was necessary for them to return home, Allen having brought word that they were to be back before dark. They inquired eagerly if Mr. Gordon was coming, but they were told that he had been prevented doing so by the arrival of a gentleman on business. Added to other difficulties, the key of the cottage door was lost, and a quarter of an hour of precious daylight had been expended in a fruitless search for it.

Allen entered fully into his brothers' troubles, and said he would go off as fast as he could to Maydew's, and try and get Joe to come and help; and before Edward and Osmond could well thank him, he had forded the pool of water in front of the cottage, crossed the road, and was striding rapidly away up the fields to the farm. He met Joe coming out of the cowhouse with a pail of milk in his hand, and telling him how much his brothers needed his assistance, he went in quest of Maydew, to whom he told the tale of the lost key, and his brothers' doubts and fears as to the possibility of making the cottage secure against thieves.

The good-natured farmer said he would send Joe directly he had done milking, and that he should bring with him a padlock, and staple and hasp, which would secure the door for the present. With this good news Allen hastened back to his brothers, and he was soon followed by Joe, who brought a small lamp, which his father advised being left alight in the cottage to burn all night; and on his own part he brought his little favourite terrier dog, which he said he would tie up in the house, and 'who was so sharp, that his bark alone was enough to frighten away all the thieves in the country.'

Perceiving that matters had taken a more favourable turn, and finding that his services were no longer required, Allen said he would return home, as the younger children wanted to see him walk in his stilts. With Joe's assistance, the work of rendering the cottage secure proceeded more rapidly. The young farmer was neither ingenious nor inventive, but he was strong, willing, civil, and obliging, and he felt pleased to assist the Masters Gordon, who had been kind to him at those times when the villagers and the gentry occasionally joined in a game at cricket on the common. He had felt their conduct in strong contrast with that of some young gentlemen of the name of Wyld, who had laughed at him, and ridiculed his rustic manners. Besides, he was a humane lad, and pitying the distress of the Jarvises; he was desirous of doing all he could to help them; and joined heart and hand in the kind undertaking of the two brothers. He pulled the boards about, and fitted first one piece and then another, and laid them ready for Edward's hammer and nails, and he assisted in placing the door on its hinges, and fastened on the padlock. When it was time to go, he helped manfully in barring up the shutters and making everything as secure as time and means allowed of. Many fears were expressed by all three boys that even their best exertions would be of little avail if the thieves were determined to come; the time allowed for making the repairs was very inadequate to the task.

Edward and Osmond wished they might have been permitted to remain far longer; at the same time, they were grateful for the indulgence that had been granted them in being allowed to carry out their project, and, trained to habits of obedience, they returned home, punctually at the hour they had been desired.

CHAPTER IV.

New every morning is the love
Our wakening and uprising prove;
Through sleep and darkness safely brought;
Restored to life and power and thought.

KEBLE.

EDWARD and Osmond slept soundly the night after their laborious day; but on the following morning they awoke before daylight, aroused no doubt by the anxiety they experienced concerning the fate of the cottage. It was a cold frosty morning; but the boys' impatience caused them to quit their warm beds long before it would have been proper for them to leave the house.

Edward talked of lessons to begin the day with, and Osmond spoke of breakfast; but it would be "ages," he said, "before the servants were down to give them any."

Why, thought Edward, can we not help ourselves, it is what we must now learn frequently to do; and he asked his brother to assist him in making a fire, and then they provided themselves with milk and bread, and by the time the servants made their appearance, the boys had partaken of a comfortable repast, and had got thoroughly warm preparatory to setting off on their walk.

The air of the morning, though keen, was invigorating, and the boys ran quickly over the frosty ground, scarcely slackening their pace a moment till they reached the cottage; on nearing which, they heard the sharp, shrill bark of Joe's little dog, which they welcomed as a joyous herald, since it seemed to give notice that everything was as they had left it on the previous night. This proved, on inspection, to be the case, for nothing had been moved

from its place, and there was not the slightest trace of an intruder having even approached the shattered cottage.

The boys extinguished the lamp, which was still burning, and set at liberty the trusty little dog, who gambolled off to his home. Edward and Osmond, hardly less lively in their movements, following, to communicate the good tidings that all was safe at the cottage. At the gate of the farm stood Joe, caressing his little favourite; he was on the look out for the young gentlemen, and rejoiced with them at the good news they brought. He said he hoped it would cheer the poor old people, of whom he gave a very indifferent account; Jarvis being, he said, so lame, he could not rise from his bed, and his wife too was confined there by a succession of shivering-fits, brought on by fright and exposure to cold the night of the storm.

The brothers said they would see and speak to Jarvis after they had been home. They would not stop then, as they wished to be back in time to join the family in their morning devotions, and to see their father and mother, and to render them any little service they could; for though they were amused themselves in the occupation that fully employed their time, they did not forget that their parents were in affliction. They wished, by every act of love and kindness in their power, to show how much they felt for them.

After passing an hour happily and profitably at home, the two brothers set off to renew their labours at the cottage, calling in their way at the farm to pay the Jarvises a visit, and carry them a bottle of wine, which Mrs. Gordon sent them on hearing of their illness. The old man and his wife were thankful for this gift, which was very acceptable in their low and weakened state; not but

what Maydew and his wife were very kind and attentive to them, supplying them with the same food that they partook of themselves.

The boys gave an account of their proceedings on the previous day, which was listened to with much interest. Edward said he was sorry that he had no good news to tell about the watch, as, on diligent search, it could nowhere be found. The old man expressed a good deal of regret at its loss, at the same time he declared himself very thankful for all that had been done for him and his wife. Mrs. Jarvis, too, appeared very grateful, and said nothing more about her bonnet.

Now that she no longer laboured under the unnatural excitement which fright had brought on, and that her mind had returned to its ordinary state, the good sense which she, as well as her husband, possessed, prevented her from making any further display of weakness.

On quitting the Jarvises' room, the boys encountered Joe, who was on the watch for them, and who, well pleased, led them to an outhouse, and pointed out to their notice a pile of boards of different lengths, that he said his father told him the young gentlemen might have, if they liked, to assist in the repairs of the cottage. This was indeed a valuable gift; for though the boards were not new, they would supply the places of many that had been entirely washed away, or rendered unfit for use by the torrent that had rushed through the building. Joe added that his father had given him leave to carry the boards down for them, and shouldering his burden, he marched stoutly on to the cottage, Edward and Osmond following with a few more pieces, which Joe, in his eagerness to help, had left behind.

The young farmer would willingly have stayed to lend his aid in the repairs, but he knew it was his duty to return to the farm, where there were many things for him to do; but he promised to work hard, and to beg his father to let him off as soon as possible. As soon as he was set at liberty, Joe said he would not fail to hasten back and bring with him the lamp and the little guardian of the night, his terrier "Wasp."

It was a charming morning; the frost had crisped the ground around the cottage, the sun shone in bright at the open doors and windows, as the brothers, full of health and vigour, set cheerfully about their work. The lower part of the cottage had been nearly repaired the day previous, but such places as remained open, Edward finished, Osmond assisting and advising as he went on; but soon the parts to be mended were found to be above his reach, although he raised himself on a stool placed on the top of Mrs. Jarvis's washtub, which had served him the day before for steps. At last the work came to an entire stand; there was no proceeding any farther without a ladder, and it was absolutely necessary that one should be procured; Edward said he would go to the farm and borrow one, and in the mean time Osmond said he would employ himself in shovelling away some of the heaps of broken plaster that strewed the room, Jarvis's spade luckily being at hand for the purpose.

Osmond was diligent, and he had completed his task before his brother returned. He thought Edward was gone a very long while, and looked out impatiently many times. At length Osmond espied him turning round the corner of the road that brought the cottage into view. He was tired and heated, and panting under the weight of the

heavy ladder he was heaving along. No one was to be found at the farm to help him to carry it. Maydew, his son, and the men being all at a distance off in the fields. The farmer's wife lent the ladder, but advised Edward to wait for help. He said he could not afford the time, and carried it off by himself; but it was a most fatiguing undertaking, and when Osmond ran out to meet him, he declared that he should want half an hour's rest before he could possibly resume his work.

Notwithstanding this assertion, half that time had not elapsed before Edward, with the assistance of his brother, had raised the ladder against the cottage, and was busily engaged in measuring boards to fill up one of the largest openings in the front. But none of the pieces would fit; in vain he tried first one and then another, as Osmond handed them up to him: they were all too long, and it was necessary that they should be sawn to the proper length—but where was the saw?

They had not thought of bringing one. Edward slowly descended the ladder, and cast so rueful a look on his brother, that Osmond, though almost equally vexed at the loss of time occasioned by this want of forethought, could not help laughing; and Edward, declaring that he must either laugh or cry, laughed too, adding, "that he feared they were very clumsy workmen, and did not half know their business."

"Very likely," replied Osmond; "but we might do better if we thought over, before we came, what tools and other matters we should want; as it is, there is nothing to be done but for me to run off as fast as I can and fetch a saw." So saying, he hastened away, telling his brother he "would be back before he missed him." Edward em-

ployed himself in the mean time in examining the bedding in Matthew's room. He found it still so wet that the water kept dripping from it, and the bedclothes were so plastered with mud, that it was impossible they could be used without being first washed. On Osmond's return, the brothers consulted together on the subject, and it appeared to them that getting this bed into a state proper to be slept in, would be one of the hardest parts of their undertaking. They declared, laughingly, that they could not wash; and then they became grave when they remembered that they had no money to pay a laundress. But the most serious part of the business was, how to get the bed and mattress dry; and as they sawed and hammered away, they agreed that on the following morning they would make a large fire in the sitting-room, and drag the bedding before it. As to the washing, they hoped Mrs. Jarvis would be well enough on the morrow to do that herself. In the mean time they determined to keep steadily on all day, covering up, to the best of their power, the openings around the lower room of the cottage, considering that if they could once make that habitable, and render the bed fit to lie on, they might get the Jarvises back by the end of the week, during which, farmer Maydew had promised to give them food and shelter, and thus preclude all chance of their being sent to the Union, the dread of which at times still preyed upon the minds of the old couple.

The brothers received no assistance from Joe all that morning, as he had been detained to fetch the veterinary surgeon, and otherwise attend upon two of the cows that had made themselves ill by eating of a poisonous shrub.

The sun was just sinking below the horizon, and Ed-

ward was saying to Osmond, that he was afraid they should have to go and leave the cottage without the *guards* of the preceding night, when they heard the merry bark of little Wasp, and in a moment or two after, his master came running in, and lighting the lamp which he brought fresh trimmed, and tying up his dog, helped to fasten the shutters; and the door being locked, the three boys walked together as far as the farm, hoping, as they went, that all would be as safe as on the night before.

The Jarvises were of course talked of, and the brothers were sorry to hear that there was not the least chance of receiving any help from them for a long time to come; and as to Mrs. Jarvis washing the bedclothes, it was quite out of the question, for she was so weak she had scarcely risen from her bed all day.

What was to be done was a subject of great debate; Joe mentioned his mother, who, he observed, had a kind heart, and was always ready to help any one in distress; but then she was in the midst of a large wash herself; and Patty Green, who was the only person he knew likely to work without pay, was helping her. Giving money was out of the question, and Edward and Osmond knew of nothing that could be done, unless one of their own servants would undertake the business. Accordingly, with the sanction of Mrs. Gordon, they made an application to the housemaid, who, they thought, appeared the strongest of the party; but she declined lending her services. With the cook it was still worse, for she asked the boys if they had ever heard of such a thing as a person in her "capacity" leaving the dinner, to run about the country washing for other people in a tumble-down house.

The kitchen-maid, a good-natured young woman, who

happened luckily to be by, and who knew and liked the Jarvises, now volunteered her services, which were most gladly accepted, and it was arranged that she should come to the cottage soon after breakfast on the following day, and that the boys were to have plenty of hot water ready for her on her arrival.

Their minds thus set at ease on this point, Edward and Osmond passed a happy evening, and amused their brothers and sisters with an account of their proceedings during the day, not omitting to tell about the ladder and the saw, their forgetfulness concerning which had caused them so much additional labour and loss of time.

Allen explained that he had not been able to visit his brothers at the cottage, and go on errands for them, having walked to Stoneleigh with his papa, who went on business connected with the subscription which was being raised for the sufferers in the late storm. Helen, who was as much interested with her brothers' narrative as any of the boys, and who felt a lively concern in the affairs of old Jarvis and his wife, offered the use of her needle, in repairing the various rents which the boys told her were made in the hangings and other furniture of the bed, and she promised to come along with Susan the following morning, and take a survey of what was necessary to be done.

CHAPTER V.

By patience and perseverance we accomplish many things which at first appear impossible.

DR. JOHNSON.

EDWARD and Osmond were up the next morning at the same early hour as that on which they had risen the pre-

ceding day, and they had just got down stairs, with the intention of lighting a fire, and preparing, as before, their breakfast, when they were surprised by the appearance of their elder sister.

"What, Helen!" exclaimed her brothers; "up so early! Have we disturbed you?"

"Not at all," said Helen; "but I thought," added she, laughing, "your heads might chance to be so full of what you have to do, that you would perhaps forget the lucifers; and mamma said last night, that if I saw you before you went, I had better advise you to take some dry wood with you, as most likely all you would find in the cottage would be too wet to burn."

"That is a bright thought!" exclaimed Osmond; "thank you, thank you!"

"There are coals there," said Edward; "I saw some in the closet where old Mrs. Jarvis keeps them. Do you think they will burn, Helen?"

"O, yes," replied Helen; "coals do not burn the worse for being wet; and now do you both go and chop a large basket of dry sticks, and in the mean time I will light the fire, and put on the milk for your breakfast."

The repast being finished, the boys, provided with a large supply of dry wood, and as many old copybooks as Helen could collect at that early hour of the morning, set forth to their work in full glee, first making their sister repeat her promise that she would come and look how they were getting on.

Edward and his brother were so intent upon what they considered a very amusing part of their undertaking, that they had almost forgot, till they arrived at the cottage, that there had been any doubt as to its security.

"All is safe," said Osmond, as his brother unlocked the door; and the boys entered.

"Yes," replied Edward; "everything is as we left it last night, except that the lamp is extinguished."

"Blown out most likely by a current of air from a hole in the wall," said Osmond, as he loosened the fastening of the little dog, and sent him bounding home.

"A hole in the wall!" repeated Edward, thoughtfully; "I must look about for it, or we shall give the old people cold."

"Yes, but do not stop now," said Osmond, all impatience to begin making a fire, at the same time shaking some of the sticks they had brought into the damp grate, and on to the hearth where the water had not yet thoroughly subsided.

"We had better fill the boiler first for Susan," said Edward, "and hang it on the hook ready to receive the warmth of the sticks the moment they blaze up." So saying, he hastened off, followed by his brother, to the well, and drawing up two or three buckets, they filled the boiler, and suspended it over the fireplace. Edward then removed the sticks Osmond had shaken into the grate, and proceeded to lay them in the proper manner, with plenty of paper beneath, and a pile of coals on the top. A match was then applied, and the mass took fire, and promised to burn well; but as the fuel kindled, and the flames spread, there poured out a volume of smoke that soon filled the room, and almost stifled the boys.

"Open the door!" gasped out Edward.

"It is only the damp; there has not been a fire lately," said Osmond, catching his breath, as he stood in the open air.

"That is all, I dare say," said Edward, whilst fresh volumes of smoke impeded his utterance.

"I think opening the door only makes matters worse," said Osmond, closing it.

"I will pile on more wood," said Edward, "and when the chimney is once warm, it will leave off smoking—perhaps."

But it was all in vain the brothers tried first one plan and then another, taking off the coals, then putting them on, then laying on fresh wood, shutting the door, then opening it again, and, as a last resource, closing both door and window-shutters; but nothing would do, and in despair they abandoned the attempt to make a fire, and turned their attention for a time to something else, till the church clock striking ten, caused their thoughts again to recur to the great object of the day, the rendering the bed fit for the old people to lie in, and restoring the bedclothes to their usual cleanly state.

"Let us try again," said Edward.

"Willingly," replied Osmond; "and I think the weather looks finer; perhaps, after all, it was only the cloudy morning that prevented the smoke from ascending."

"Let us lay it all over again, regularly and well," said Edward, as Osmond, all impatience, was cramming between the bars the last remains of the copy-books, and kindling them with a lucifer.

"That is the last of the paper," cried Edward, looking about for a fresh supply, "and the dry wood is almost all gone."

"Let us break up some that lies by the coals in the closet," said Osmond; "and here is Wasp's bed, too;"

and he gathered up the straw which Joe had brought for his little dog to lie on, and filling the grate with it, he soon covered it with sticks, and again applied a match.

But the same ill-luck continued. There was no making a fire; not that the materials did not kindle, for the straw blazed, and even the damp wood caught fire, but the smoke burst forth in a still more stifling manner, and the room was completely filled with an atmosphere so dense, that the boys could scarcely discern each other's faces.

"Extraordinary!" exclaimed Osmond.

"What can it be?" said Edward. "What can be the reason this fire will not burn as well as any other?"

At this moment some one opened the cottage door, and the boys rushing out to prevent suffocation, encountered their sister, who, with the maid, was standing wondering if a fresh disaster, in the shape of fire, had overtaken the ill-fated cottage.

As soon as her brothers had recovered sufficient breath to speak, they communicated to Helen the disagreeable and puzzling fact that it was impossible to make a fire in the cottage grate.

Helen entered fully into her brothers' troubles, and pondered long on what could have occasioned them, suggesting first one reason, and then another, as the probable cause of the failure.

While discussing this important business, the youthful trio were pacing up and down the path that separated the cottage from the little front garden. Helen, after a time, paused in her conversation, to remark on the effects of the inundation. All the shrubs, and, above all, the rose-trees, the pride of the village, were rooted up and

carried away by the flood. Nothing remained as it had once been.

"What a change!" exclaimed she, "since mamma and I were here in the summer, sketching. Certainly it is winter now, but the change is so very great. And where," continued she, stopping short in her walk, "is the picturesque old chimney? Oh! I recollect now you told us it was blown down. Yes, all the top, I see, with the curious brickwork, is destroyed; only the part that has no beauty in it remains."

As Helen thus lamented the demolition of the picturesque old chimney, the thought flashed into her brothers' minds that here was the solution of their difficulty. They looked at each other for a moment, and a simultaneous burst of "How stupid we have been!" broke from their lips.

"How could we think of making a fire in a room without a chimney?" said Edward, in a tone that showed he was greatly annoyed at his want of perception.

"It is very vexatious," said Osmond, addressing Susan, "not to be ready for you. You must come again to-morrow, and in the mean time we must contrive some plan for heating the water."

Susan replied that it was out of her power to come again, for she had received a letter from a former mistress, expressing a wish that, as she was going to leave her present place, she would return to her immediately, and that the L—— carrier had promised to take her there on the morrow in his van.

The boys were very sorry, and Susan was sorry too, for she really wished to be of use. She said she would go into the cottage, and see if anything could be done to

further the wishes of her young masters. At this minute Allen, accompanied by Trevor, arrived, and soon learning the state of things, said—

“Why do you not make a fire outside the house, in a place where the wind does not blow, and swing the pot over it on cross-sticks as the gipsies do?”

“That will be the very thing,” said Helen, as her elder brothers hastened away to put Allen’s plan into execution; “and while you are so occupied, I will go into Matthew’s room and up-stairs with Susan, and see what there is that we can do.”

The first and best thing to be done, Susan thought, was to remove the bedding in Matthew’s room, and to lay the bedstead open to the air.

The bed, with the mattress, she placed upon chairs by the open window, to assist in getting them dry. She then, with Helen, went to take a look up-stairs, where they were joined by the two younger boys, who said Edward wished to have the bricks carefully removed from off the bed, as they had all been talking about building up the chimney again, and care was to be taken not to break the bricks.

Susan said that it would be best not to lose any time; and, with the children’s assistance, the bricks that had not been broken in their fall, and all the pieces which could be of any use, were piled up in a corner of the room. There was, besides, a considerable portion of the fallen chimney lying on the large box beside the bed; this, too, was moved, and just as Edward ran up to say the water was nearly hot, the party were exclaiming at a discovery they had made—which was nothing less than Mrs. Jarvis’s new bonnet, covered with dust, and very



MRS. JARVIS'S CRUSHED BONNET.

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TILDEN FOUNDATIONS**

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much crushed, but preserved from wet by a portion of the brickwork, which had covered it as it were in a sort of penthouse. Helen shook it out, and said she would take it home, and try to restore it to its original shape and good appearance; she also suggested that it would be well to look into the box where the old people kept their "Sunday clothes," that in case these had been wetted, they might be hung out to dry.

Allen said he would mount his stilts and fetch the key from the farm, just asking if it was agreeable to Jarvis and his wife that an investigation should take place. The offer was willingly accepted; and the old people were glad to learn, when the key was restored to them, that the stout box had almost entirely resisted the water, and that nothing had sustained any material injury.

Helen and Allen employed themselves in drying, with a cloth, such parts of the inside of the box as were wet, and in folding and carefully replacing everything they took out, so as not to be injured by the damp. Trevor made himself useful by replenishing Susan's fire with wood, while she worked away as fast as she could over her wash-tub. In the mean time Edward and Osmond were holding a grave consultation respecting the chimney.

The cottage, like many others in retired country places, was of rude construction; and the chimney stood projecting a considerable way beyond the side of the building to which it was attached. It has been stated that the upper part of the chimney was thrown down by the trees, when they were uprooted by the storm; but this was not all the damage that was done. A large fissure had been made, that extended from the broken portion at the top to within three or four feet of the bottom.

It was absolutely necessary, in order to render the cottage habitable, that the chimney should be repaired; and the boys pondered long upon the best way of accomplishing this end. As near as they could calculate, there were enough whole bricks to repair the "rent," as they called it, on the outside, and to fill up two or three trifling places in the inner part of the chimney; and this they felt certain they could do, if they had any means of procuring a sufficient quantity of mortar, and could borrow a trowel. They turned the matter over in their minds again and again. Money they had not, and their only hope was to call to mind some good-natured person or other who would supply them with the materials for their work, without pay. They consulted Helen, who could advise nothing; but Susan, who was a native of the next village, said she had a cousin who worked at B—— with a very good-natured master; and she thought if he was told "all about the cottage, and how the young gentlemen were going to build it up themselves, he would very likely give them some mortar for the chimney."

If, thought the boys, the good-natured bricklayer will but do this, we can manage very well.

The bricklayer's house not being much more than a mile from Jarvis's cottage, they posted off as fast as they could to prefer their petition; leaving Allen, who had received permission to remain all the afternoon, at the cottage, to keep up Susan's fire, and to put up, as he himself proposed, lines in the largest room below, to hang the clothes upon, that they might dry and be in security, during the night. As Allen was thus engaged, his mind was busily employed thinking how he could assist in the momentous affair of rebuilding the top of the chimney. Sev-

eral plans suggested themselves ; but then there was always that one great want, namely, the want of materials. At last, when the hope of suggesting anything useful had almost forsaken him, he recalled to mind a circumstance that he thought might possibly be turned to account. In a ramble one day, not long ago, over some fields, in company with his father and Trevor, they were stopped in their progress by a wall made of flint stones. The boys said they could climb over it ; but Mr. Gordon pointed to an opening farther on, where a man was at work pulling it down. On gaining the spot, Mr. Gordon and the boys stood a few moments looking on, and in answer to an inquiry, the man informed them that his master was having the wall taken down, no partition being needed between the two fields ; and by so doing he should gain ground enough to yield four or five more bushels of corn.

It was of the stones composing this wall that Allen now thought ; for it struck him that they might serve as a substitute for bricks ; but he determined not to say anything on the subject till he had made some inquiry. He was all impatience for the return of his brothers ; but they did not come back till the day was too far advanced for him first to obtain permission at home, and then to go to the farmer to whom the stone wall belonged.

Edward and Osmond, although they had been absent a long while, brought back good news. After waiting a considerable time, the bricklayer, in whose praise Susan had spoken, returned home, and the boys stated the nature of their errand. The good man had heard of the havoc made in the adjoining village by the late storm, and said he was desirous of contributing his mite towards alleviating the sufferings of the poor people. He commend-

ed Edward and Osmond for their zeal in the cause, and promised to second their labours by giving them a large tub of mortar, which, he said, his man, who was going that way on the morrow in his cart, should leave at the cottage.

Susan was much pleased to learn that her young masters had been so successful, and redoubled her efforts to finish her work; but she said she must have some assistance beyond what the young gentlemen could give; and Allen, who said he ought now to go home, promised to call at the farm on his way, and beg Joe to make haste and come and help. But Allen was spared this trouble, for before he had proceeded a hundred yards he met Joe running full speed towards the cottage. Allen nodded to him as he passed, and a few minutes afterwards Joe was actively engaged in helping Susan.

Every one worked so well, that just at sunset all was finished; the beds left in a place of security, the clothes hung up to dry, the fire outside extinguished, the lamp lit, the windows barred, and last of all, little Wasp, with plenty of fresh straw to lie on, and his supper beside him, was tied up to act as guardian of the night.

All the party trudged merrily home, well satisfied with their day's work; the account of which by the boys furnished much amusement to the family group, and Susan was highly pleased with a present Mrs. Gordon made her of a warm serviceable dress, as a reward for her obliging and friendly exertions in aid of those who stood much in need of the good offices of their fellow-creatures.

CHAPTER VI.

Gay hope is theirs, by fancy led—

* * * *

Theirs buxom health of rosy hue,
Wild wit, invention ever new,
And lively cheer, of vigour born;
The thoughtless day, the easy night,
The spirits pure, the slumbers light,
That fly the approach of morn.

GRAY.

THE following morning, two more of the family were added to the early breakfast party. Edward and Osmond were making some preparations for their day's work by the light of the lamp, and Helen, who had kindled the fire, was just putting on the milk, when the door opened, and, to the astonishment of all, in walked Allen and Trevor.

The new-comers were assailed with a variety of questions, as to why they had risen so early, what they intended to do, and whether it was anything connected with the cottage; but they would tell nothing, except that they wanted breakfast, and were going out as soon as the sun was risen.

Helen supplied her younger brothers as well as the elder with breakfast, and during the hasty meal Allen looked mysterious, and Trevor important, while Osmond laughed, and tried to get their secret from them, saying he knew it was something connected with the cottage.

"Time will show," responded Allen, with a grave inclination of the head; "but look, the sun is up, and I must be off." So saying, he started up, and ran out at the door, followed by Trevor.

Allen had obtained leave to go and make inquiry about

the stones, on condition that he did not go alone, and did not go out before sunrise.

Osmond looked after his brothers, and laughed.

"That fellow Allen," said he, "is always scheming about something or other; I should not wonder if he had hit upon a plan to build up the top of our chimney."

"I wish he may!" exclaimed Edward; "but come along; we are losing our time;" and bidding Helen good-bye, he and Osmond hastened away to begin their day's labour.

On opening the cottage door, the brothers found everything safe as usual; but to any one not as determined to persevere in a good cause as they were, the sight that met their eyes was not very encouraging. The room was hung with Susan's wash, the wet from which had dripped on to the boards, and there was not a dry place to stand upon, while the tables and chairs were covered with beds and mattresses, so that it was a matter of some difficulty to effect an entrance, in order to loose Wasp, and extinguish the lamp.

"These things never will be dry," said Osmond, dolefully, as he struggled on his way through the impediments offered by wet blankets and linen, which he ran his head against every moment.

"Never is a long time to talk of," said Edward, assuming a gaiety he did not quite feel; "let us open the shutters, and let in the air; the morning is luckily frosty again, and that will help us a good deal. In the mean time we have no occasion to remain in this room; there is plenty we can do till the mortar comes, and we can begin the chimney. It is well we brought the bricks down and put them outside yesterday."

"Yes, that was through Helen's good advice," replied Osmond; "but is not that the bricklayer's cart? Yes, it is; the man is stopping at the gate; how kind of his master to have sent him so soon!"

The boys ran to the gate, and the tub of mortar, with a trowel lent for the work, were quickly handed out, and before the man went, he good-naturedly gave a little instruction as to the use of the materials. From Joe, too, who arrived soon after, bringing a ladder with him, they received a good deal of assistance, till it was time for him to return to his dinner.

The occupation was new to Edward and Osmond, and they thought it pleasant enough, each taking his turn in using the trowel, while the other handed up the bricks, so that this change kept them in sufficient exercise to prevent their feeling the cold.

When Joe left them, the brothers rested a little while from their work, and finding out a sunny nook near at hand, they sat down to take a little refreshment. They were just finishing their repast, when they heard the merry voices of Allen and Trevor as they ran along the road, and in a few minutes the younger boys were standing before their brothers, their countenances glowing with health and pleasure, and each holding something tied up in his pocket-handkerchief.

"I know," said Osmond, trying to get a peep at the contents of Allen's handkerchief, "that you have been about something concerning the chimney. Now, tell us what it is."

Allen made no reply, but laying his bundle before him on the ground, he stooped down, and untying it, held up a large flint stone, crying out, at the same time,

"Will a few bushels of these suit your purpose?"

"You may have them, if you will," said Trevor, who by this time had produced his stone, and laid it out to view.

Edward took the stones in his hand, and turning them about, said to Osmond that he thought they would do very well.

Osmond thought so too, and Allen being then asked to tell how he had obtained the stones, related what has been already mentioned respecting the wall, and his thought of the useful purpose to which the stones might be turned, provided he could obtain permission to have them. He then told how he had hardly been able to sleep for impatience to go and beg the owner of the wall to give his brothers the means to build up the top of old Jarvis's cottage chimney, and how, when he got to the farm, he was full of hopes and fears, because the farmer's wife said they should have the stones, and the farmer said they should not; and how, at last, the woman prevailed with her husband, and he gave his consent, but said that the boys must come and fetch them away from the field themselves, for he could not, on any account, spare a man to convey them in a cart.

"If he gives us the stones, that is as much as we can expect," said Edward, when Allen had concluded his little history.

"Yes," said Osmond, "that is very good of him; but how we shall get the stones here I cannot think. They are full two miles off at the least."

"We must fetch them in a wheelbarrow," said Edward; "but what a time it will take!"

"We will tell you," said Allen, "what Trevor and I have been thinking of."

Edward and Osmond were all attention, and Allen went on to say,

"To-morrow, you remember, is Trevor's birthday, and he is sure papa will grant him a favour; so he means to ask for the horse and cart to carry the stones."

"And that all the children who are old enough may be allowed to go with us," added Trevor, "and help to fill the cart. Helen, too, says she will assist, and even Fanny wants to go."

"But you forget," said Edward, "that Tom is going to take the carriage-horses to the person who has bought them; and as James is gone, there is no one to drive the cart."

"O, as to that," said Allen, "I would drive it myself; but you forget Joe."

"True," replied Edward, "he has the promise of being half the day with us to-morrow; though, as you say, either of us could drive the cart."

"Trevor and I," said Allen, "must now go home, for we are to walk with papa to Stoneleigh, where there will be a meeting of several gentlemen, and the money subscribed is to be divided among the poor people who suffered from the storm; so when you come home in the evening, you will know how much the Jarvises' portion is to be."

"I am glad of that," said Edward; "for Osmond and I intend to advise the old people to lay out a part of it in repairing a portion of the roof of the cottage, which it is beyond our powers to render as substantial as it ought to be."

"And the windows," said Osmond. "We must have them put in with part of the money; for even if we under-

stood the business of a glazier, we have no glass. There will be plenty of money, I hope, for these repairs, and a great deal to spare besides, for Jarvis and his wife."

"I hope so," replied Allen; but we shall know all about it in the evening; and now I must say good-bye, for the present."

"Good-bye!" said Edward and Osmond; "and thank you for the welcome news you have brought us."

CHAPTER VII.

The trivial sound, the common task,
Will furnish all we ought to ask;
Room to deny ourselves: a road,
To bring us, daily, nearer God.

KEBLE.

Right well she knew each temple to decry.

SHEKSTONE.

THE subscription for the sufferers by the late storm was liberal; still there were so many claimants for the bounty, that when it came to be divided, each share was comparatively but a small sum. The aged and infirm received more than the strong and healthy.

To Jarvis and his wife was awarded one pound, fifteen shillings,—a bountiful gift, as it appeared to Edward and Osmond, unaccustomed as they were to the price of workmen's wages.

"This will set us up," exclaimed Edward, as he received the money from his father, to give to Jarvis, and consult with him on the best way of expending it: "we shall have enough for roof and windows too."

But on the following day, when he presented the money to Jarvis, and talked the matter over with him, he was

sorry to find that it could not possibly be made to go as far as he expected. Not but what Jarvis and his wife were very grateful for the gift; but the old man said, that from the representation the young gentleman had made of the state of the roof, he was certain that it would take more than a pound to repair it. There was wood to be found, and workmen's wages to be paid; and Jarvis said he was convinced nothing under one pound five would be sufficient. And then Edward calculated that there would be only eight shillings remaining, and that, he was aware, would be wholly inadequate to replace the windows.

Mrs. Jarvis, who joined in the consultation, and was desirous that the money should be put to the best use, observed that she was afraid they must have a few shillings to start with when they went back to the cottage, for besides providing themselves with the necessaries of life; there must undoubtedly be some small outlay of money to purchase articles, which, though apparently trifling, were indispensable to tolerable comfort.

Edward and Osmond looked disappointed, and said that all the repairs were going to be made by them.

Mrs. Jarvis replied, that she was well aware of their great kindness, and was sure they would do all in their power; but she reminded them of the hole in the teakettle they had told her of, and the broken cups and saucers, and other small damages that her little establishment had sustained.

The boys felt the truth of what Mrs. Jarvis said, and they parted from their old friends to pursue their work at the cottage, in a less buoyant state of mind than that in which they had entered the farm. However, by the time the brickwork of the chimney was finished, and they had sur-

veyed their labours with satisfaction, a hope began to arise in their minds, that by some means or other the roof would be repaired, the windows put in, and the cottage all ready by the end of the week, for the reception of its owners; and when, an hour after, they, with the younger members of the family, were gathering up the stones and rattling them into the cart, which Joe had driven up, everything like doubt and difficulty had vanished; especially as, on consulting with Helen on the subject, she suggested the idea, that as their own establishment was going to be very much reduced, it was possible that the household articles of which Mrs. Jarvis had spoken, could be supplied from their store.

"Many hands make light work;" so that a sufficient quantity of stones was conveyed to the cottage, the ladder procured from the farm, and yet two or three hours' daylight remained for the boys to prosecute their labour; and so industrious were they, that, aided by Joe and the two younger boys, who brought the materials up the ladder as they were wanted, the top of the chimney was finished just at the close of the day.

Allen and Trevor were gone home; Joe and Osmond had carried off the ladder, and Edward, having finished the usual arrangements for the night, was just locking the door, when a voice from the road called out to him,

"That won't do, young master; it won't stand; it is all awry."

Edward ran forward, and perceived standing in the road, and looking up at the chimney, the young man who had brought the mortar from the good-natured bricklayer.

"Come out to where I am," continued he, "and look up, and you will see, with your own eyes, that it is all

crooked, and the first gale of wind will have it down directly."

Edward placed himself beside the young man, and was exceedingly sorry to see that it was as he said. In their haste, he and his brother had not been careful to build the chimney straight.

"How vexatious!" exclaimed he; but willing to hope that, though an unsightly piece of work, it still might answer its purpose, he said, "If there is no wind before the mortar is dry, it will perhaps hold together."

The man shook his head; and on Edward repeating what he said in an inquiring tone, he replied,

"That it might perhaps hold for a time, but he did not think it very likely."

With this very small encouragement, Edward was obliged to be content; and he retraced his steps homewards, pondering, as he went, on the disagreeable circumstance, and sincerely hoping that the wind, which blew fresh in his face, would not increase, and that during the night it might fall entirely.

"If," said he to Osmond, when he was recounting the unpleasant discovery, and the conversation he had had with the bricklayer's man,—“if the wind does but keep off, and we have clear, frosty air, and bright sunshine for a day or two, our work will be dry, and then it will stand.”

"It would be most provoking to have to do it all over again, and our time so short," said Osmond. "I hope the wind will not rise."

And this hope was repeated many times during the course of the evening, and many times did the anxious young workmen look out into the dark night, to see what kind of weather it was, and hope, contrary to all the indi-

cations of a rising storm, that "it would be a fine night yet!"

But they were doomed to disappointment; the wind blew stronger and stronger, and several times during the course of the night they were awoken out of sleep, rendered light by their anxiety, by the beating of a heavy rain against their windows, and the howling of the wind as it swept round the house, and shook the sturdy trees in an adjoining plantation.

"We cannot hope our work has stood such a night as this," exclaimed the boys despondingly, as they met in the morning.

"The wind has been very violent," said Helen, who, as usual, was up to prepare her brothers' breakfast. "I was afraid the rain would have prevented your going to work, but luckily it promises to be a fine day, and I dare say you will soon build the chimney-top up again, if it is indeed blown down. Here is Allen, with his plumb-line, which he made last night by pouring melted lead into a sand mould of his own contriving, and then boring a hole through the neck of the ball, and inserting a string."

"Thank you, Allen," said Edward; "that is what we ought to have had at first."

"I wonder we did not think of it," said Osmond, shaking his head. "I doubt we are clumsy workmen. But are you not coming with us, Allen, this morning; you promised to mend the leg of the table, and put a new bar in place of the broken one, into Jarvis's arm-chair; and Trevor says he will try and patch up the walls with paper, and——"

"Trevor," interrupted Helen, "has a little engagement with me this morning, but he will come to you as soon as

he can ; and I shall come too, with my needle and thread ; and perhaps," continued she, smiling, "we may bring a little good news with us ; so cheer up."

"Another mystery !" exclaimed Osmond, laughing. "Well, if it is as good as the last, it will be a capital thing."

"I am not certain yet," said Helen, "though I hope I shall succeed. But good-bye now ; it is positively a fine morning."

As soon as her elder brothers were gone, Helen communicated her little plan to Trevor, whose assistance she had bespoken, though she had not yet told him in what respect he could be of use.

"I have been thinking," said she, "as I lay awake in the night, how I could possibly help in the serious business of the cottage windows ; for unless they are replaced, it is impossible the poor old people could live in their cottage this cold winter weather."

"And have you thought of anything ?" eagerly inquired Trevor.

"I have," replied Helen ; "but I shall have to call upon you to give up something of value which belongs to you—something which you like very much." Helen paused, and looked at her brother, whose colour rose, and who fidgeted rather uneasily on his seat.

Trevor's fault of character was an unwillingness to give, and too great care to preserve exclusively, all that belonged to himself. His parents had seen this error, and had taken great pains to correct it, and he was beginning now to get the better of it ; still the old enemy would too often break forth, making him appear selfish and disobliging. At the same time he had a kind heart, and when his feel-

ings were properly excited by remonstrance and reasoning, he was capable of generous and self-denying conduct. He was exceedingly fond of his sister Helen, and often suffered himself to be greatly influenced and guided by her opinion and advice. This brother and sister had, too, a taste in common, which led them to be very often associated together in the same pursuit. They both had a great love of gardening, and the plots of ground which had been allotted to each of them, bore evidence of their careful culture.

Early in the spring, Mr. Gordon had made Ellen a present of several large, substantial hand-glasses, and a little later in the year, Trevor, who had been making great efforts to overcome the faults in his character, received the same valuable present. Great was the delight these glasses afforded. What rearing of choice flowers, what growing of cucumbers, and even melons, they were the means of effecting! At least there would have been melons if the summer had but lasted a little longer.

These hand-glasses had been carefully put by for the winter, and were nearly as good as new, their unimpaired state being greatly owing to the plan Helen and Trevor adopted, of covering them, and the plants they sheltered, with matting, every cold or wet night.

It was the sacrifice of these highly valued treasures, that Trevor was now called upon by his sister to make.

When first asked to give them up, he positively refused. He said his papa had given them to him for his sole use and pleasure, and it could not be expected he should part with them. He wondered how Helen could think of asking. His sister, in reply to this last observation, said, she thought of asking him to give up his glasses for the benefit

of some of his poor fellow-creatures in distress, because she was going to do the same herself.

"What! part with what gives you so much pleasure!" exclaimed Trevor, "and what is so useful to you!"

"If, my dear brother," returned Helen, "we only give up what we do not care for, there is no merit in the sacrifice. But we do not want to talk of merit, we want to assist poor Jarvis and his wife in a time of great need; and I feel, if I do not do something for them, I shall neglect a duty, and shall not feel happy."

"You are going to work for them," said Trevor; "I heard you tell Edward you were going to mend the bed-curtains and other things."

"Yes," answered Helen; "it will give a neater and more cheerful air to the cottage to do this, instead of having rags fluttering about. But my stitching will not put the windows in. Think, Trevor, how sad it would be for those poor old people to sit in their cottage, with the rain beating in, and the cold wind blowing round their heads, getting ill, perhaps, and obliged to keep their beds."

"There are shutters," said Trevor; "they could be shut to keep out the cold."

"And the poor souls have to sit in the dark all the time! You cannot think of such a thing, I am sure, Trevor; you, who are unhappy if you are only a few minutes unemployed." Helen paused for a few moments, and then added, in a low and earnest voice, "Mamma said the other day, it was a sad thing to be old, and sick, and poor, and have no help."

"Suppose," said Trevor,—“remember, I am only supposing such a thing,—that I was to give up my hand glasses, what good would it do the Jarvises?”

Helen brightened, for she thought she discerned symptoms of yielding in her brother. "I will tell you," said she eagerly; "my plan is to get Mr. Pullen, the glazier, of whom papa bought the glasses, to take them again, and in exchange put the windows into the cottage."

"The glasses are not new, you know," said Trevor.

"I am aware of that," replied Helen; "but I have not told you all; you remember that Mr. Pullen is brother-in-law to the great nurseryman, Mr. Flower, at Sunbrook."

"When I went with papa to buy my glasses, and he was looking about to find the best kind, Mr. Pullen recommended the sort we have, saying, his brother always used them, and added, laughing, 'He has so many, it is quite a little fortune to me.' Now I think Mr. Flower, to oblige us, would take our glasses of his brother at the same price papa gave for them."

"What makes you think he would?" inquired Trevor.

"Because," replied Helen, "papa has often given Mr. Flower slips and seeds of choice plants that General Ashley has from abroad. Do you not recollect hearing that Mr. Flower got the first prize at the horticultural show, last year, for the finest yellow roses; and he had the cuttings from papa, and said how much obliged he was to him for them."

"I remember," said Trevor, "and mamma said how pleasant it was, when people had it in their power to assist, and give pleasure one to another, and ——" then Trevor suddenly broke off; but in a moment or two he continued, "I know I ought to give up my hand-glasses, and to feel pleasure in doing so, but I do not; it makes me very unhappy to have to part with them."

"Think of the pleasure you will give to others," said

Helen, "and how obliged Edward and Osmond will be, and how good we all shall think you."

"And you are quite determined to part with yours?" said Trevor.

"Quite," replied his sister.

"Well, then, I will give up mine," said Trevor, making a great effort to overcome his reluctance to part with his highly valued property; "but I know I shall repent."

"Oh! no, you will not," replied Helen, affectionately kissing her brother; "thank you, dear Trevor, it is very kind and good of you; and if at any time you feel sorry at the thought of your loss, remember the comfort you have had it in your power to bestow upon our poor old friends. I will now go and see if mamma is up, and tell her that you have consented to my plan; she said last night that Tom is going with the cart this morning to Stoneleigh, and that he should take the glasses to Pullen for us, with a note from me; but as the day is so fine, I will ask her to let us walk there, and speak ourselves about the glasses."

"I should like that," said Trevor; "I think we should make a better bargain if we saw Pullen ourselves."

After breakfast, when Helen and Trevor had made themselves useful in several little household matters, they obtained leave from their mamma to walk to Stoneleigh, Tom having preceded them with the glasses, and left a message with Mr. Pullen to say that the children would call and speak about them.

The day, though cold, was bright, and the air invigorating; and Helen chatted gaily as they went on their way, to keep up the spirits of her brother, which every now and then were inclined to flag, as he thought of the great sacrifice of his pleasure he was about to make.

On arriving at the glazier's Helen and Trevor found their glasses placed in a row, beside the path that led from the entrance-gate of the yard up to the house ; and Mr. Pullen was standing in front of them, apparently wondering why what he considered as some of his best workmanship was thus returned on his hands. Helen looked anxiously at the countenance of the man of whom she was about to request a favour. She feared it did not seem propitious, and it was not without considerable hesitation that she opened her business ; but as she proceeded to state the helpless situation and ruined prospects of the old people, whose cause she was advocating, and spoke of what her brothers were doing for them, and the need they stood in of assistance from those who had it in their power to help, her courage returned, and she ended with fearlessly asking Mr. Pullen to take the glasses, and get his brother to buy them at prime cost.

The glazier listened patiently and respectfully to all Helen had to say ; but when she had concluded, he replied, that it was not in his power to comply with her request. His brother, Mr. Flower, on whom Helen had rested the success of her scheme, was leaving Sunbrook, and had already more glasses than he could well remove. And as to himself, he had contributed as much money as he could spare to the general subscription. Here was a great disappointment ; for Helen, though she had cautioned her elder brothers not to be too sanguine as to her untold scheme, had herself felt little or no doubt but that she should succeed in having the cottage windows put in free of all cost.

She was standing with a lingering hope, as Mr. Pullen still talked on, that she might at last win him over to her

purpose, when a smart carriage, drawn by two beautiful grey horses, drove up and stopped at the gate. The footman dismounted from the box, opened the carriage door, and a fine military-looking man stepped out and walked up the path. "General Ashley," said Mr. Pullen, and he advanced to meet him.

General Ashley was the gentleman for whom Mr. Gordon had transacted some law business, and from whom he had received the seeds and plants already spoken of. The children had never before seen him, but they had heard their father speak highly of him, both as a brave officer and a gentleman of great urbanity of manner. Helen and her brother were much pleased with the good-natured expression of his countenance, and his frank, open way of speaking. He had called about an alteration he wished to have made in his green-house, and he gave his orders in a pleasing way; and when the glazier told him that he feared it would hardly be possible to do what he wanted in the specified time, as he was under an engagement to finish some work for another party, he said,

"Do not distress yourself, Pullen; I can wait."

As General Ashley was returning to his carriage, he stopped short, and pointing with his stick to Helen and Trevor's glasses, which were standing beside the path, he said,

"By the bye, I had forgotten part of my errand. I must have some more of these."

"Oh!" thought Helen, "if he would but buy ours!"

Mr. Pullen, who was duteously following on the steps of his good customer, requested to know when they would be wanted.

"Directly," replied the General, "if I can have them. You have some here, I see."

"These are second-hand," replied the glazier.

"Second-hand," repeated General Ashley, "that will not do; I must have new ones;" and he was passing on, when Pullen's eye fell upon Trevor, who had drawn close, the better to observe the military man, and remembering Helen's wish, he good-naturedly said,

"These glasses are in very good condition; and, perhaps, General, you can have them at a bargain; this young gentleman is very desirous to part with them."

"Indeed!" said the General, "how is that?" And looking at Trevor, he added, "You want the money for some new amusement, I suppose, young gentleman; tired of gardening—eh?"

"Oh, no," said Trevor; "I am very sorry to part with the glasses, but——"

"But," interrupted Pullen, who attributed the boy's hesitation to bashfulness,—“but it is a little sacrifice in favour of the sufferers by the late storm.”

General Ashley appeared interested, and Pullen explained the nature of the bargain he had been requested to make, namely, to take the glasses back at first price, and supply materials and labour for replacing the broken windows of Jarvis's cottage. "This I cannot afford," continued he; "but I would sell the glasses for the young gentleman if I could."

General Ashley was not only a benevolent man himself, but a great admirer of kind actions in others. He was very much pleased with such an instance of good-nature in one so young as Trevor, and said he would purchase the glasses. He warmly commended the little boy, and expressed surprise at so clever a thought entering his head.

Trevor was greatly delighted with the praise, and though he felt that what the General said was chiefly due to his sister, he wanted the resolution to state the case as it really was, and thus greatly lessen the encomiums which were so grateful to him. He had conceived great admiration for General Ashley, and felt exceedingly proud of his notice. It certainly passed through Trevor's mind, at first, to mention his sister; but he seemed to think he had let the right moment pass, and was contented to take to himself all the merit of the transaction. The General spoke quickly, too, and he had satisfied himself that the glasses were in good condition, paid Pullen their original price, had entered his carriage, and driven off, before Trevor became quite aware that vanity and love of praise had led him to be very selfish.

In the mean time Helen, though wholly indifferent as to any praise her good-natured action might draw forth, was standing a little apart, a most interested spectator of what was passing; and when the General was gone, she hastened to thank Pullen, and to express the pleasure she felt at the successful issue of the business.

The glazier counted the money into her hand, saying, that if he was not at the present time so much engaged, he would willingly do the job for her himself; but as that could not be, he mentioned an honest, industrious man, in another part of the town, to whom he advised her to apply, adding, that he would speak to him that morning, and beg him to be moderate in his charges.

Helen was delighted, and, with Trevor, hastened to tell the good news, and to consult with her elder brothers as to when the glazier should be told to come to the cottage, to measure the size of the windows.

Good news could not well have arrived at a more opportune moment.

The high wind of the preceding night, in spite of all hopes and wishes to the contrary, had blown down the upper part of the chimney, and the work was to be done over again ; and to be done, too, by Edward and Osmond alone ; for just as Allen was setting off with his brothers, Mr. Gordon sent word to say he must not go, as he would be wanted at home. Joe, too, was more than usually busy ; so the brothers had not only to fetch the ladder from the farm, but to toil up and down it with stones and mortar, and to go over again all the laborious work entirely by themselves.

Edward, heavily laden, was making one of his weary ascents, and Osmond, with a similar burden, was preparing to follow, when, looking towards the road, he exclaimed,

"There are Helen and Trevor coming, and Helen is waving her handkerchief ; I am sure she has got good news to tell us. Let us run and meet them ;" and safely depositing his load on high, he glided down, and hastened to meet the fresh comers.

"Good news, I know," said both the brothers, as Helen, with a smiling face, entered the cottage gate.

"Yes, yes," cried Helen ; "the windows can be put in as soon as you please, and without expense !"

"How ? Can it be possible ?" exclaimed Edward and Osmond ; "explain, explain ! What can you mean ?"

Helen briefly stated that, when thinking over what could be done to further the cause her brothers had so much at heart, she had thought of the hand-glasses, and of the exchange which she had been so fortunate as to effect.

The boys were exceedingly pleased, and thanked their sister again and again for her clever management, and for her good-nature in making what they knew was by no means a small sacrifice of her own pleasure; nor was Trevor overlooked; he, too, was abundantly thanked and praised for his share of the benefit conferred; and this time he did not seek to attribute undue praise to himself, frankly confessing that Helen alone had all the merit of the thought, and that at first, even, he had been unwilling to lend his aid to the scheme.

"The more merit in yielding at last," said Edward, giving his young brother a hearty shake of the hand.

But Edward's praise, and the pleasure both he and Osmond expressed, did not restore Trevor to his usual spirits; he could not forget that he had deprived his sister of her just share of approbation, and had assumed to himself with General Ashley all the merit of the transaction. On their way home, Helen saw that something weighed on her brother's mind, and sought to know the cause. Accustomed to confide all his troubles to his sister, he told her what was the matter. Helen assured him that she had not desired praise, and that the successful result of her plan was all she cared about. Still Trevor was not satisfied, and though in the excitement of going back to the town, finding the new glazier, and arranging with him to go that very afternoon to take the measurement of the cottage windows, he lost for a time his sense of uneasiness, it was not till night, when he talked the circumstance over with his mother, that his mind was fully relieved.

Mrs. Gordon pursued an excellent plan in the education of her children; she was in the habit of assembling them around her in groups, according to their different

ages, every evening before they retired to rest, and examining them as to their conduct during the past day. By her judicious questions, and gentle admonitions, she acquired an influence over each young mind that was conducive of the greatest benefit. At first, the effort to tell of all they had done wrong was often painful, and required great resolution; but the children became convinced that their mother had only their happiness in view, and that her opinions and advice were the best counsellors they could have. On all her children she enforced the necessity of prayer and confession of sins to Him who alone can pardon the erring soul.

Mrs. Gordon desired to be the friend of her children, and the elder ones, who were of an age to appreciate the value of such a mother, always flew to her in all their troubles; and in her kind sympathy and judicious advice they found comfort and support. With them, of course, she did not seek to exact strict conformity to her own views, neither, in many instances, did she insist on her advice being followed, leaving them frequently at liberty to act to the best of their own judgment.

But to return to the labourers at the cottage. The good news imparted by Helen had so invigorating an effect on Edward and Osmond, that they seemed to lose all sense of fatigue, and worked away so vigorously, that the chimney was completed in time to try if a fire would now burn in the room without smoking. It was rather a nervous moment when the match was applied to the contents of the grate, and the kindling flame and curling smoke were anxiously watched as to the direction they would take; and when it was evident that they rose steadily, that the combustible matter was duly consumed,

and the air inside the cottage was perfectly pure, a cry of joy burst from the lips of the young workmen, and drawing forward a couple of chairs, they sat down, and for a few minutes abandoned themselves to the luxury of repose after toil, and to the delight resulting from success in a troublesome undertaking.

The brothers had not been long in the enjoyment of rest, when they were interrupted by the entrance of the glazier recommended by Mr. Pullen, and whom Helen had appointed to call that afternoon. The interruption was far from being unpleasant; Edward started up and attended the man in making his measurements, while Osmond, with Joe, who arrived at the same time, set about the usual arrangements for leaving the cottage in safety during the night.

CHAPTER VIII.

How poor are they who have not patience!

SHAKESPEARE.

"OUR first business must be to make up a large fire in the cottage," said Edward, as, guided by the first faint streaks of greyish light that preceded the rising of the winter's sun, he and his brother hastened cheerfully along to their self-imposed toil.

"Yes," said Osmond; "and we will put all the bedding so that it may dry in the warm air."

"We will shut one shutter," continued Edward, "and hang a cloth over the other opening, to keep the heat in; we shall have light enough for our work then."

These arrangements were accordingly made, and the fire was burning fiercely, and the blankets and reeking

beds were sending forth streams of vapour, when Mrs. Gordon, accompanied by Helen, Allen and Trevor, and one or two more of the younger boys, arrived at the cottage.

"Come in," cried Edward; "I am glad to see you."

"And I," said Allen, who was foremost of the party, "should be happy to return the compliment, if I could—but I can't see you."

"Who could, in such a mist?" exclaimed Trevor.

"What a fog!" cried Frank, who had thrust himself in between his brothers, eager to see the cottage, of which he had heard so much.

"What is it; what is the matter?" inquired Helen, in her usual gentle manner; has anything happened?"

"My dear children, come away; come out of the cottage this moment," cried Mrs. Gordon, who, quickly following after the children, had in a cursory glance ascertained the state of the case, and, alarmed at the unhealthy situation in which her elder sons had placed themselves, called to them immediately to leave the cottage.

Edward and Osmond obeyed the summons, but it was some time before they could comprehend the nature of their mother's fears; they said they were quite warm, and could not imagine that they ran any risk from the vapour in which they were immersed. When at last Mrs. Gordon's explanation had served to convince them of the truth of what she said, they lamented the circumstance, and doubted if they could ever accomplish the work they had to do inside the cottage, and at the same time get the bedding dry.

Mrs. Gordon fully entered into the difficulty of the case, and finally set the minds of her sons at ease by

saying that she would desire Tom to fetch away the beds and blankets, and she would have them dried in the laundry at home. The bed furniture, too, she said, should be also carried there, as it would be running too great a risk to let Helen make the repairs at the cottage. The bed coverings she advised having hung out in the frosty air, and the fire, to avoid draught, being put out, she did not object to the younger boys lending such aid towards the repairs as they were capable of giving. Allen, according to promise, set about mending the furniture; Trevor had brought paper, scissors, and paste, and was ready to work; but, upon examination, it was found that the places in the walls, where the plaster had given way, were much too large to be covered up with such frail materials.

"If," said Edward, "we use plaster, the walls will be too damp for a length of time for the old people to live in this room with safety to their health; I am aware of that, though it did not occur to me that we should get any harm surrounded with moisture for a short time."

"What can we do, mamma?" said Osmond. "Cannot you suggest something?"

Mrs. Gordon reflected for a few minutes, and then said that if canvas was first nailed over the dilapidated places and then covered with paper, it would answer well, excluding the outer air, and looking neat and comfortable.

"The very thing," said Edward, gaily; but, in a moment afterwards, he added, in an altered tone, "but where is the canvas to come from?"

"Before suggesting this plan," replied Mrs. Gordon, "I remembered that, in a lumber closet at home, there is a good deal of the material in question, besides several pieces of broad-cloth, which would also be very serviceable

in covering some of the largest of the broken places in the walls. These I will give you with pleasure, and I will go and look them out, and send them down to you directly by Tom. By the time I return, he will have the cart and horse ready, if your little brother made half the haste he said he would in going to tell him to come here."

The boys were not kept long waiting, for in less than an hour from the time Mrs. Gordon left them, Tom trotted up with the cart, and handed out, not only a large roll of the promised material, but two hammers, and an ample supply of nails of different sizes. With the servant, too, came Frank, an obliging little boy, who had obtained leave to return and help his brothers, and who, in the present instance, had no will of his own, and was ready to do the biddings of every one who employed him. He handed Edward his hammer, picked up Osmond's nails when they fell, chose the right-sized pieces of paper for Trevor to cut, and by a series of small unobtrusive services made himself very useful.

Every one was so exceedingly busy, and the time passed so pleasantly, that the short winter day drew to a close, and the hour for departure came quite unawares upon the happy party.

"How the day is overcast!" said Trevor, who was trying, in the fading light, to match the pattern of some pieces of paper.

"It is that the sun is set, Master Trevor," said some one, speaking at the door.

The boys recognised Joe's well-known voice; and Edward exclaimed, "Are you here already; I thought you said you should only come just in time to bring Wasp?"

"That is all I am come for now," replied Joe; "it is four o'clock, and father wants me back directly."

"Four o'clock!" repeated Edward in surprise; "and we were to be at home a quarter past, and Frank with us, too;" then turning to his little brother, he said, "Run home as fast as you can, and do you Allen and Trevor go with him, there's good boys; and Osmond and I will shut up the cottage and follow as fast as possible."

"There are the clothes out of doors," said Osmond; "I fear we must not stop to hang them up in the cottage. I wish we could, they would be getting so nice and dry during the night; but I suppose we must not wait;" and while Edward was fastening the shutters, he gathered them together and laid them in a heap on a table at the far end of the room.

The cottage door was then locked, and the two brothers set off running as fast as they could, and soon overtaking the younger boys, they hastened them along, and the whole party arrived at home a very few minutes after the appointed time.

Edward and Osmond felt so much the kind indulgence granted them by their parents, in allowing them so much liberty to prosecute the scheme they had very much at heart, that they were doubly anxious to obey orders, and would have been exceedingly sorry if, in the eagerness with which they followed their own views, they failed in punctuality.

Mr. Gordon often said to his boys, "Those who would govern well, must first learn to obey. When you are men, you will feel the truth of this observation; and you will also find the great advantage of punctual habits, both as to yourselves and as regards those with whom you have transactions."

In the present instance, Edward and Osmond reaped

the advantage of their obedience, as will be presently shown. On opening the cottage door the following morning, and letting in the light, they were startled by seeing the floor of the large room strewed with broken laths and plaster ; and on looking up they perceived a large place broken open in the ceiling, and water dripping from it. The boys stopped short in dismay at this new disaster, and it was some time before they discovered what had occasioned it. At first they feared some one had entered the cottage from above, and had carried off all that they could find of value ; but on looking round they found every thing safe, and all just as it had been left the night before. After pondering for some time, the brothers came to a right conclusion as to the cause of this disagreeable accident. The water, in passing through the cottage the night of the flood, had been in part impeded in its progress by the rafters of the bed-room, and by degrees had settled in one point, and the weight had at last broken through the ceiling, bringing down with it a large portion of the plaster.

Under any circumstances, so much additional work as this accident would occasion could not but be disagreeable ; but with the time for the cottage being made habitable growing so short, it was very annoying, and for a few minutes the courage of the young labourers almost forsook them. They looked at the gaping hole and the loosened plaster around, and thought it would be beyond their power to repair the damage.

Osmond spoke first :—

“ It is well,” said he, “ we did as we ought last night ; for if we had remained beyond our time to hang up the blankets, what a pretty condition they would have been in ! They would have been plastered all over, and there would be no good-natured Susan to wash them again.”

"Well," said Edward, drawing a long breath, which sounded very much like a heavy sigh, "I am glad you can find comfort in something."

"Oh! yes, we must not let such a thing as this broken ceiling discourage us," replied Osmond, trying to laugh.

"But what can we do?" said Edward: "even if we can make the ceiling all right again, we have so little time."

"And we shall have still less," said Osmond, who was fast recovering his spirits, "if we stand idly talking."

"That is true," said Edward, resolutely rousing himself from his short fit of despondency; "and we will consider what is best to be done."

The boys consulted for some little time together: and on examining the damage in the ceiling more attentively, Edward pronounced that he thought he could repair it if he had the materials; but there was the difficulty; there was nothing at home that would do, and no money with which to make any purchases. Osmond mentioned Waller, the bricklayer, but Edward said he should not like to beg again of him; it seemed like taking advantage of his good nature. At last Edward thought of something which he was of opinion would answer. When he was at Waller's house, the day on which he went by Susan's advice, he had been struck with the beauty of a little Blenheim spaniel, a great pet of the bricklayer's wife, which she was fondling in her arms, and saying she should one day get his picture taken. Now Edward happened to have among his treasures at home, a well-coloured print of a black-and-tan-coloured little dog, so like Mrs. Waller's favourite, that it might be supposed to have been taken from him. This print, though much prized by himself, he determined

to part with, and to make a present of to Mrs. Waller, and then he felt he should not be unwilling to ask for a little more assistance. Osmond thought it a bright idea, and Edward hastened off to put his plan in execution.

Nothing could answer better; the print gave great satisfaction, the dog in the print being pronounced to be the counterpart of little "Floss;" and the good-natured brick-layer, who was always glad to have his wife pleased, was doubly willing to grant the "little trifles," as he called them, of which Edward stood in need. He moreover called one of his boys away from his work to carry off directly to the cottage all the articles that were wanted. This additional act of kindness Edward felt of much value, as time was so precious; and he was indebted, too, to Waller for some useful hints as to his mode of proceeding.

In the mean time the work at the cottage had not stood still. Osmond had been joined by the younger boys, and they had all gone vigorously to work at their different occupations. Edward was cheered on his return by their cheerful countenances and merry voices; and every one was ready to assist him in his laborious task. For a time all other operations were suspended, as, mounted on a high stool, they watched Edward as he cleared away the loose plaster, and removed the broken laths, supplying their place with the substantial ones with which Waller had furnished him. This accomplished, the most difficult part of the business appeared to be achieved, and the laying on the mortar afterwards was a comparatively easy matter. Still, even this took a long while to do; and when at last the job was fairly over, Edward was obliged to rest himself entirely for some little time. While thus reposing, he had leisure to look around, and was much pleased with

the neat appearance of Trevor's work. The coloured papers, and the way in which they were arranged, gave quite a cheerful look to the room; and the skilful manner in which Allen had mended the broken chair, and given steadiness to the leg of the table, also called forth his admiration; and in two or three other respects the cottage seemed to assume a more habitable appearance, for Osmond had brushed down the shelves, and they were now ornamented with several household utensils, which Frank and Harry, a still younger boy, who was allowed the treat of being an hour or two at the cottage, had busied themselves in cleaning and polishing.

"We are getting on, I think," said Osmond, pausing in his labour to speak to his brother for a few moments; "you have made a capital job of the ceiling!"

"I am glad I got through it at last," replied Edward. I had nearly given all up this morning, I felt so disheartened. I am afraid I really should, if I had not thought of the poor Jarvises, and all mamma has said to me about perseverance. I fear I want perseverance; I think it is a fault of my character."

"It is so pleasant," said Osmond, "to overcome a difficulty."

"I feel that fully now," replied Edward; "and I am resolved that for the future I will never begin anything without finishing it. Do you think," continued he, rising, and looking round the cottage with his brother, "we shall get all done in time?"

"I wish the roof was covered in," said Osmond; "for if a heavy rain was to fall, down would come the ceiling, I fear; the wet plaster could not make sufficient resistance."

"I wish," said Edward, "papa could find a workman for us; but every one is so busy now; the flood has made so much work."

"Shall I go and speak to him about it?" said Allen, who was not now particularly busy. "I dare say he would find some one very quickly."

This offer was willingly accepted, and Allen returned home to solicit Mr. Gordon's assistance.

In taking their recent survey of the cottage, the discoloured state of the walls and ceiling of Matthew's room had struck the brothers as very unsightly, and they thought, after the clean, comfortable room the old people had been occupying at the farm, it would not be very pleasant to them to sleep in such a dirty-looking place. Osmond said whitewashing would give it a tidy appearance at once, and Edward, pleased with the suggestion, said they would use the whitening and size which Waller had given him to cover the fresh plaster in the large room. He said the bricklayer had given him so liberal a supply, that he knew there would be enough for both purposes. Mrs. Jarvis's pail, which had been saved among the branches of the Matthew and Sarah, was brought forth, and Edward made the mixture according to the bricklayer's direction.

Osmond, whose arms were fresher than his brother's, was to undertake the ceiling, as being the most fatiguing part. But he thought not of fatigue; he was delighted with his task, and making himself a sort of platform of such materials as were at hand, he set his pail beside him, stirred his brush in it, and dashed along the ceiling, scattering the fluid to the right and left.

"We must have this room done before dark," ex

claimed he to his brother, as Edward entered with an old brush in his hand, which he had succeeded in hunting up from a heap of rubbish, and was proceeding in a more workmanlike style to wash the walls first with water; "we must finish before dark; I shall soon have done here, and then I will help you."

"Gently, gently," cried Edward, as a shower of white-wash from the brush of his energetic brother sprinkled him all over; "mind what you are about; I do not want whitewashing."

"I beg your pardon," said Osmond, "I must be more steady in my work;" and for a few minutes his movements were quieter; but soon forgetting everything but the pleasure of seeing the dirty marks disappear under his vigorous strokes, he filled his brush so full, that the liquid not only again splashed his brother, and poured over himself, but an unlucky stream fell into his eye, and put a stop to his operations. In vain he rubbed and then washed the injured part; he could not resume his work, and he was standing fretting with vexation and impatience when Mr. Gordon, accompanied by a carpenter, entered the cottage.

Mr. Gordon examined his son's eye, and seeing that nothing of the injurious matter that had fallen into it remained, tied a handkerchief over it, and bid him remain quiet till the workman whom he had brought had ascertained the extent of damage to the roof, and calculated the cost of repairing it. As soon as this was done, Mr. Gordon took Osmond home, notwithstanding his entreaties to be allowed to resume his work, and assurances that since his eye had been covered up it was a great deal easier. Mr. Gordon knew too well the delicate nature of the organ to

yield to his son's wishes, and on reaching home, after again examining his eye, he told Osmond that he had better pass the remainder of the day entirely in the dark.

"Under no circumstances must you employ your eye," said he; "you may sit with it tied over, with the rest of the family, if you like; but if you have the resolution to shut yourself up in the dark, the chances are in your favour of going out again some time in the course of the day, to-morrow. I give you your choice; do which you think proper."

It is very dull, thought Osmond, to pass a whole evening without employment, and to be shut up in the dark. He hesitated as to what he should do.

"Keep in the dark," said Helen, drawing to her brother's side; "it will be so much better for you, and I will come and sit and talk to you."

"I suppose it will be best for me to do so," said Osmond, still feeling very sorry at the thought of being deprived of his usual occupations. "It would be a hard thing to be confined to the house at this time. Thank you, papa, for allowing me a choice. I will remain in my room in the dark."

"Your decision is a wise one," said Mr. Gordon. "I am glad to see you have the resolution to bear a little present inconvenience for the sake of a future good. The time, too, is not very long, and your sister kindly says she will spend part of the evening with you."

But this Helen was prevented from doing by an invalid lady, who came unexpectedly to pass a few hours with the family, and Mrs. Gordon happening to be from home, Helen was wanted to play and sing, and otherwise contribute to the amusement of the visitor. Neither could Ed-

ward be with his brother, as he was sent out on business for his father ; so, after the children were in bed, Osmond was left to his own solitary meditations.

The poor boy's eye pained him a good deal, but that to him was not the worst part of what he had to bear. He was of an excitable nature, and of a somewhat impetuous temper, and he fretted and chafed under the irksomeness of his situation. Imagination, too, was now and then at work in an unpleasant manner ; for when he felt most pain, he thought that perhaps the inflammation would increase, and that he might be confined to the house many days, and be prevented helping Edward, and that, after all, the cottage would not be ready for the reception of the Jarvises at the end of the stipulated week.

In this uncomfortable manner passed the first two or three hours of Osmond's seclusion. The excitement of his feelings then became a little subdued, and he began to reflect upon the circumstances attendant on the accident ; and, as is often the case, traced his mishap to his own want of prudence. He became fully aware that if he had acted with more judgment, and had had more patience, he should have escaped the suffering he was now undergoing.

He recalled to mind how often his parents had warned him against too great eagerness in the pursuit of an object, and advised him to proceed with more caution and circumspection ; how often they had told him not to be too hasty ; and to take more time when he had a purpose to effect. After a time, his thoughts took another direction, and he recalled to mind a blind man who lived in the next village, and who had often excited his compassion ; and he reflected what a dreadful thing it must be to lose

the eyesight. He considered for a moment how he should feel if he lost his ; what a terrible privation it would be ; what a complete loss of happiness he seemed to feel it would cause. And yet it might be ; an accident might in a moment deprive him of this precious sense. It then occurred to him how little he had hitherto reflected upon the blessing it was to be able to see, of the use and endless enjoyment that the sight afforded. He felt how he had daily and hourly been benefited by this gift of his Maker, and yet how little gratitude he had ever evinced for it ; but now that he had suffered a temporary suspension of this blessing, he was impatient and angry under the infliction. He became aware of the impropriety of his conduct, and he was struck with his want of thankfulness to God for His goodness. In deep humility, and with a heart awakened to better feelings, he knelt down, and remained for some time engaged in earnest prayer and thanksgiving.

When Osmond had finished this act of devotion, he felt greatly soothed and comforted, and the tranquillity of his mind seemed to pervade his body as well, for he became cooler, and the irritation of his eye appeared to be passing off. He went to bed, and soon fell into a refreshing sleep, which lasted till daylight the following morning, when he was rejoiced to find that he experienced no other inconvenience in his eye than a sense of weakness. He hastened to rise, and would gladly have accompanied Edward to the cottage ; but this his brother told him he was forbidden to do ; and Osmond, calling to mind his reflections of the preceding evening, submitted patiently to this command of his parents. Towards the middle of the day his eye seemed so perfectly well, that there did not appear any necessity for his being kept in any longer, and,

delighted with his liberty, he ran off in high spirits to join his brother.

It was a busy day at the cottage; the repairs of the roof were begun, and the windows were being put in. Edward had been wishing for his brother, and could not half enjoy what was going on without his companionship, and he was much pleased when he saw him arrive. Edward's attention had been much attracted towards the two workmen; still he had found time to finish whitewashing the little room, and Osmond had suffered so much in connection with this part of their labours, that he owned he did not regret it was over.

Osmond had not been long arrived before he was followed by Helen and some of the younger boys, each bringing a basket containing plates, teacups, and other useful articles of crockery, to replace those the flood had destroyed or carried away. It was a great amusement to the little boys, the arranging them all on the shelves, or placing them in a small cupboard that stood near the fire-place. Helen asked if a few knives and forks were wanted, and she said her mamma had desired her to see what cooking utensils were needed by Mrs. Jarvis, for, she added, laughingly,

"You are very good day-labourers, brothers, but I do not think you know anything about cooking."

The boys were delighted with this offer, and showing their sister everything that they had been able to recover, she made an inventory of what was required, and hastening back, said she would send them down, that they might be arranged in due order preparatory to Jarvis's visit, which it had been previously arranged was to take place on the following morning.

The old man, who was nearly recovered from his attack of rheumatism, felt impatient to visit his cottage, and though the brothers would have preferred his waiting till everything was quite ready for his final reception, they had not the heart to refuse his wish.

CHAPTER IX.

Never did mockers waste more idle breath.

SHAKESPEARE.

I hourly learn a doctrine of obedience.

Ibid.

THE carpenter employed to repair the roof of the cottage was under some obligation to Mr. Gordon, and he was willing to gratify the young gentlemen, by doing all that was required (including engaging a relation of his to lath and plaster the inside), for the sum set apart for the purpose. The work proceeded very expeditiously; indeed, so much so, that Edward and Osmond formed the resolution of petitioning Maydew to let the Jarvises remain at the farm till the cottage was thatched and entirely finished. Mrs. Gordon had so often sent provisions, that keeping the old people could not, the boys thought, be attended with much expense, and they resolved to prefer their request on the following morning, when they were to call and ask Joe to bring them the promised load of straw.

Breakfast was going forward at the farm when Edward and his brother arrived. Jarvis and his wife, with cheerful countenances, were sitting at the table with Maydew and his family, thankfully partaking of the homely, but wholesome fare that was provided.

"You are coming to look at your cottage this morning," said Edward, addressing Jarvis; "and Farmer Maydew, I wish you would come with him; I want you to see what we have done; and I have something particular to say to you; do come."

"Cannot you say what you want now, Master Gordon?" asked Maydew, smiling good-naturedly.

"No, not here; not now," replied Edward; "you must be at the cottage when I speak."

"Indeed!" replied the farmer; "well, I think I can spare half an hour this morning; and my old friend and I will come together, as soon as we have finished breakfast."

The brothers then hastened away to prepare for their reception. Osmond said he would light a fire,—it would make the room look so much more cheerful; and Edward busied himself by giving, as much as possible, an air of neatness to everything around. He got a broom, and swept the litters from the floor, and with a cloth rubbed off several spots from the new windows, every now and then opening and shutting them for his amusement. Edward had often opened and shut windows before, but never with the feeling he then experienced; for he was enjoying, by anticipation, the pleasure he was greatly the means of bestowing on two unfortunate fellow-creatures. Osmond's fire burning brightly, he placed himself beside his brother, to look out for the expected visitors. He remarked that the front window was placed lower than it had originally been, and that panes were substituted for casement. Edward replied, that though a little more expensive, it was Helen's wish to have them thus; and then, as it was more cheerful, that he had the window placed lower, that the old man might see what was passing on the road, as he sat

by his fire; thinking it would be an amusement for him to do so.

All further remarks were suspended for a time by the arrival of Farmer Maydew and Jarvis. Osmond ran to open the cottage door, and welcome the old man to his home again, and placing him in a chair by the fire, bid him rest himself. Edward took Maydew a little apart, and pointing out to him how nearly all the repairs were completed, asked him if he would oblige him by keeping Jarvis and his wife at the farm till the roof was finished; it would make, he said, all so much more comfortable for them if the farmer would kindly consent to do so.

Maydew was much struck by all that the boys had accomplished in so short a time; and said—

“It passed his belief that two young gentlemen bred and born could have worked in the way they had done.”

He looked all round, and praised everything he saw, and ended with saying, that he could not refuse his share of kindness when he saw such an example before him, and that the old people were welcome to stop till the cottage was quite finished.

“Oh! farmer Maydew,” said Osmond, who had overheard the last part of the conversation, “do not talk of an example; it is you who have done more than all of us; it is you who kept the poor souls from going to the work-house.”

The brothers were much pleased at the delay that was granted; and it must be owned that they were not a little gratified with the praise bestowed on their labours by the honest farmer; but nothing could be compared with what they felt on witnessing the effect their exertions in his cause produced on Jarvis. The poor old man seemed as

delighted as a child to find himself once again in his home, and that home more comfortable than it had ever been; he got up and down, and looked first at one part, then at another, and then sat down again, exclaiming every time—

“I never thought it; I never thought I should be in my dear old home again! I thought all was over when the flood came, and nearly swept away my poor old woman and me. Dear, dear; what will she say! She will be like to go out of her mind for joy! Well, well; we will thank God for all his mercies; for He it was that put it into your heads, young gentlemen, to be so kind to two poor old creatures, who can never do anything for you but bless you, and remember you in their prayers.”

“That will be all the thanks we desire,” said Edward, who, with his brother, was much moved by Jarvis’s emotion and warm expressions of gratitude.

Before Maydew returned home, he gave Edward a little instruction as to his mode of proceeding in thatching the cottage. Maydew had been a labouring man himself, and had learned something of several trades, which knowledge he had found very useful in after-life. On first taking a farm of his own, he had thatched his barns or out-houses whenever they required it, and had thus saved a good deal of expense. Joe, too, could thatch; and when he arrived with the straw, his father desired him to remain an hour or two with the young gentlemen, to help them. This was a timely aid, for, notwithstanding Edward’s former practice, he found himself a good deal at a loss when he first began to work. By degrees, however, he got on, and when Joe left him to himself, he was able to proceed without difficulty, though the progress he made was but slow. Osmond, quite willing to play a secondary

part in this all-important business, supplied his brother with straw as he wanted it.

It happened, unfortunately for the progress of the work, that before it was half accomplished, the cold set in with great severity. Osmond, who was more actively engaged in carrying the straw up the ladder, and then gliding quickly down, contrived to keep himself tolerably warm; but Edward was at times almost benumbed with the cold, and his hands were so stiff he could hardly use them. Still Edward persevered, and Osmond encouraged him, though both brothers thought occasionally of the skaters, who were in the high enjoyment of their sport, and whom they longed to join when the time should come.

At last the happy moment arrived when their labour was to cease; Osmond brought up the last bundle of straw required by his brother, and his services being no longer needed, he returned home, as Mr. Gordon had said overnight he should want either him or his brother at home early that day.

Edward put the finishing strokes to his work, and standing on the top of the ladder, was pleasing himself with a survey of the cottage roof in its new comfortable covering, when he was startled by a loud mocking laugh, and on turning to see from whom it proceeded, he saw standing by the cottage gate a youth about his own age, of the name of Wyld.

"So there you are!" he exclaimed, on seeing he had attracted Edward's notice, "and that is what you have been after these holidays. Nobody could tell what had become of you, till my brother Peter found out that you were working as a day-labourer. I said I would know the truth of it myself, so here I am."

Edward felt his colour rise, but he commanded himself not to say anything.

"Don't you hear? Can't you speak?" continued his rude interrogator. "I say, what do they give you a day? I hope they pay you well; they ought, for it is not very gentlemanly employment."

"Perhaps," said Edward, calmly, as he quietly descended the ladder, "your notions of what is gentlemanly and mine may be very different."

"Why, everybody is talking of you," said Wyld.

"They do me much honour," replied Edward, coolly.

"You are town-talk, I tell you," cried Wyld, provoked that he did not make Edward angry. "Everybody says how strangely you are acting. Why, you have built up a chimney they say, and have been plastering away like a bricklayer's drudge."

"I have been doing my best," said Edward, commanding himself to speak without irritation, "to repair the cottage of two old people, who otherwise must have gone to the workhouse."

"Everybody is laughing at, and ridiculing you!" urged Wyld, with vehemence.

"Your everybody," said Edward, "seems a very formidable personage. I have an everybody, too, of whom I can talk, and my everybody says that it is the duty of all to do the utmost in their power to assist their poor neighbours, who are suffering under the heavy afflictions brought on them by the late flood. Those who have no money to give must aid in other ways. My father's loss of fortune has made us poor, and I and my brothers have nothing to bestow but what little benefit may arise from the labour of our hands."

This speech of Edward's, so wholly unexpected, took Wyld by surprise. He had sought Edward with the unamiable purpose of endeavouring to mortify him on the subject of his poverty; but this frank allusion to his fallen fortunes baffled him, and he was at a loss how to proceed.

Edward availed himself of the pause in the conversation to say—

"I suppose you have done something for the benefit of the sufferers?"

"Not I, indeed," replied Wyld, recovering his usual effrontery at this question.

"You have not!" said Edward, in a tone of surprise.

"Oh! the gove'nor of course gave something when the subscription-list was brought round. I wish I had had the money, I know."

"I must wish you good morning," said Edward; "I have to be at home before dark, and the sun, I see, is about to set;" and opening the cottage door, he walked in and shut himself up till his disagreeable visitor had moved off.

Wyld would fain have followed, to renew his impertinent observations; but there was something in Edward's manner that seemed to tell him he had better for the present remain quiet.

In a few minutes Joe arrived to take the ladder. He looked heated and angry.

"I suppose, sir," said he, "you have had a visit from that chap, that Master Wyld, who has just turned away from the gate. I should imagine he has had the worst of it, if you and he have been talking about anything particular, he seemed in such an ill temper. He almost

threw me down; he thrust me so roughly on one side, in passing the foot-bridge, and bid me stand out of the way, as if I was a dog."

"He has been finding a great deal of fault with my conduct, Joe," said Edward.

"He," exclaimed Joe, "he find fault with you!"

"He says," replied Edward, "my employments here are not gentlemanly."

"Does he dare to say so?" said Joe, indignantly. "Does he dare to say so of you—you who are so kind and good. I wonder what he thinks of himself, getting into people's gardens, stealing their fruit, and cutting their flowers. Is that like a gentleman, I should be glad to know? If it is," continued Joe, shouldering his ladder and marching off, "I don't wish to be one."

In the evening, when the events of the day were, as usual, talked over, Edward, as a matter of course, stated his interview with Wyld. All the elder children made various comments on the youth's rudeness, and Osmond and Helen commended their brother for the command of temper he had shown, and for the appropriateness of his answers.

"I own," said Edward, "that at first I was a good deal mortified by all Hugh Wyld said, and I felt inclined to be ashamed of the figure I cut, splashed from top to toe with whitewash, and a great hole I had just torn in my coat. A fine joke he will make of my appearance, I have no doubt."

"Yes," said Osmond, "there will be a great deal more for 'everybody' to talk about."

"It is disagreeable, certainly," said Edward, "and I wish——" he stopped short, for he caught his father's eye fixed upon him with a peculiar expression.

"Well, my boy, what is it you wish?" said Mr. Gordon.

Edward hesitated for a moment, and then said, "What I wish is, that Hugh Wyld had not seen me this afternoon, when I was at the cottage."

"Never feel ashamed," replied his father, "of being seen under any circumstances whatever, provided there is nothing wrong or discreditable in it. Let your conduct always be just towards men, and right in the sight of Heaven, then learn to rely firmly on yourself, and you will soon be indifferent to any ridicule that may be cast upon you. As regards the present instance, you were employed in a praiseworthy manner, for you were serving your fellow-creatures, and I am of opinion that I am right when I say, that you would not give up the remembrance of the pleasure you have afforded old Jarvis, to escape the sarcasms of a dozen Master Wylds."

"Indeed I would not," said Edward, with warmth, "and I dare say Hugh Wyld, with his ill-natured feelings, was as uncomfortable himself as he made me."

"That boy and his brother," said Mrs. Gordon, "are to be pitied for the manner in which they have been brought up."

"Yes," observed Mr. Gordon; "their education, in the most essential points, has been sadly neglected. I had a specimen of the method Mr. Wyld pursues in the training of his sons, when I called on him this morning."

Mr. Gordon then stated, that wishing to see Mr. Wyld on business relating to them both, he had called at his house, and was shown into the breakfast-room, where Mrs. Wyld was sitting at work, with her youngest child, a boy between five and six years old, beside her. This child

was never quiet a moment, and allowed no peace to either of his parents. He teased his mother by pulling about her working materials, entangling her threads and losing her needles, notwithstanding the incessant cry of "Don't, Arthur, don't my dear." He got hold of a book of prints, and using it very roughly, his mother took it forcibly from him, which produced a loud scream. At this moment Mrs. Wyld was called out of the room, and the young gentleman turned his attention to a box of playthings, and selecting a little ship, amused himself with pulling the mast in and out. This feat he performed so often, that at last the mast would not stand, and he carried it to his father, desiring him to set it upright. Mr. Wyld took no notice of the boy, till, on his becoming clamorous, he put out his hand to move him away; on which the boy stooped down, and creeping under his father's arm, forced himself between his knees. Here he gained his point; for thrusting his ship into his father's face, Mr. Wyld, to relieve himself of the annoyance, took it and replaced the mast. The boy then moved away, but in a minute or two he returned on the same errand, calling out—

"Pa, pa ! it is down again; put it up, pa."

"I wish you would be quiet, child," said Mr. Wyld; "I am busy now; go, go away."

But the ship was again thrust in Mr. Wyld's face; and again the father fixed the mast, saying, as he did it—

"You spoil your toys sadly, Arthur; quite a little destructive," continued he, smiling at Mr. Gordon as he spoke.

"It will not keep up," called out the boy; "you do it so badly, pa."

"Get away with you, do," said Mr. Wyld; "I cannot make it stand any firmer; go and play with something else, there is a good boy, do; there is the new windmill I bought you yesterday."

"That is broken," said the child.

"Well, well, I cannot help it," replied the father; "get along with you and amuse yourself; I want to talk to this gentleman."

But Mr. Wyld spoke in vain; and the conversation was constantly broken in upon by the troublesome child's peremptory calls upon his father's attention, till at last, perceiving that the boy had again possessed himself of the forbidden book of prints, Mr. Wyld snatched it from him, and calling him a "very naughty boy," opened the door, and putting him out, desired him not to come into the room again till he was sent for.

This resolute act was followed by loud and passionate cries from the expelled young gentleman, to which Mr. Wyld paid not the slightest attention; indeed, it seemed doubtful if he even heard them, for he carried on the conversation with more ease than he had previously done. Perhaps it was an event of too common occurrence to be noticed, for ten minutes had hardly elapsed when the little tormentor threw open the door and marched in, in his walking dress, without the slightest trace of tears upon his countenance.

Mr. Wyld apparently overlooking this act of disobedience, only said—

"Shut the door, Arthur;" but Arthur did not think it worth while to shut the door, as he was going out again directly, he having only entered the room to ask his father to give him a penny to buy a cake.

"No, no," said Mr. Wyld; "you had a penny before breakfast."

"Oh! pa, do give me one;" and the boy clung round his father, and would not be put off.

"Take the child away, do," said Mr. Wyld, on perceiving the maid had followed her young charge into the room.

The girl attempted to remove Arthur, in doing which she received a kick from the boy's leg, which made her recoil several paces, and she was beginning to expostulate on his violence, when the old family nurse presented herself at the door.

"What, will not papa give darling a penny?" said she. "Oh! yes, I am sure he will. He can't refuse, I know!"

Thus seconded, the boy redoubled his clamour; and Mr. Wyld, to purchase his liberty, took the money from his pocket, and the child seizing it, ran off, without having the grace even to say "thank you."

A cry of astonishment from some of his own little boys, at such ungracious behaviour, here interrupted Mr. Gordon's narrative; and Mrs. Gordon asked her husband if he did not make any remark on the child's conduct.

Mr. Gordon replied—

"You know how tenacious Wyld is on the subject of his sons, owing probably to his so frequently hearing of the scrapes his elder boys get into. Still, I did venture to say that I thought he spoiled the child."

"I do not spoil him," he quickly replied.

"I suppose," continued Mr. Gordon, "that I must have looked rather incredulous, for he repeated, 'that it was not he who spoiled him. To prove it,' said he, 'I gave Arthur a flogging last week; but,' he added, half laughing,

'I raised such a storm with mamma, nurse, and child, that I was fain to insure my own peace by making my escape from the house for some hours afterwards.' "

"It is sad to think," said Mrs. Gordon, "that a responsible being should be thus brought up. If not checked in infancy, and taught to control his unruly will and subdue his selfish passions, how is he to acquire sufficient force to resist the temptations that will meet him on every side when he enters into life."

"How true," exclaimed Mr. Gordon, "are the words of Solomon—'Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.' "

Devoutly did Mr. and Mrs. Gordon, in the privacy of their own room, pray that night, that the plan they pursued in the education of their children might be that which would conduce to their temporal and eternal welfare.

The next day Mr. Wyld came to call on Mr. Gordon.

It so happened that there was no room at liberty in which to receive him, except the breakfast parlour, where the younger children were seated round a table, with their books and slates before them.

Mr. Wyld cast an anxious glance towards the juvenile party, which Mr. Gordon perceiving, answered by saying—

"They will not disturb us;" and the business of the two gentlemen, which was of an interesting nature, proceeded without interruption, till, after a time, a little noise and whispering between two of the children caused their father to turn towards the table, and enquire what was the matter.

"Willie has got the headache," said Fanny.

"And I cannot learn my lesson, papa," said the boy in question, a child of six years old; as he raised his head

from off the shoulder of his little sister, on which he had been resting it.

"Come here to me, my dear," said Mr. Gordon; and the little boy got down from his seat, and came up to his father, on whose knee he tried to place himself.

Mr. Gordon took the child up, and said, "You are tired of your book, are you not?"

"No, papa, I am not tired," replied he, with a look of perfect sincerity; "my head aches."

Mr. Gordon pressed his hand to the child's forehead, and said, "Your head is hot; you had better go into the garden, my dear; and do you, Fanny, go with him; he finds the room too warm, perhaps. Keep on the south walk, and if he is not better soon, take him to his mamma."

Fanny quietly left her seat, and Willie coming up to her, they took their books and slates gently off the table, and placed them in an orderly manner on a shelf behind. They then went towards the door, which Trevor, rising, opened for them, and they passed out without making the slightest noise.

When they were gone, Mr. Wyld, who had been an attentive observer of this little scene, exclaimed, "You must have some magic in your method of managing your children."

"No," replied Mr. Gordon; "there is no magic in my management; my wife and I pursue a very simple plan; still, it is that which we consider to be most conducive to the happiness of both parent and child. When we speak we insist on being minded, and our children at once learn that it is of no use to dispute our authority."

"But how," said Mr. Wyld, "can you expect implicit obedience from very little children,—creatures that cannot reason?"

"It is from that very circumstance," replied Mr. Gordon, "I expect to be obeyed; as my children grow older, I leave them more liberty of action, and I encourage them in many cases to judge for themselves. We endeavour that our orders to the younger children shall be as little oppressive, and as few as possible; and as to the elder ones, however much we may sometimes cause them to act contrary to their own inclination, they find, I believe, upon reflection, that our control, whenever it is exercised, is intended solely for their good, and they learn to look upon their mother and father as their best friends."

"Ah!" said Mr. Wyld, "you have comfort in your elder sons. Clever, well-behaved lads they are! They must be a pride and a pleasure to you." And the father of two of the worst-conducted youths in the neighbourhood sighed heavily as he spoke.

"Yes," replied Mr. Gordon; "our boys make great part of the happiness of our home."

CHAPTER X.

All hail, ye tender feelings dear!
The smile of love, the friendly tear,
The sympathetic glow.

BURNS.

WHEN Mrs. Jarvis had recovered from the injurious effects of the fright occasioned by the late storm, and had regained her bodily health, she made herself useful in many ways in the domestic concerns of the farm. There were several little matters which required no great manual exertion, but in which a right judgment and good management were valuable.

The poor woman was so obliging and cheerful, and expressed herself so exceedingly grateful to Mrs. Maydew, that she quite won her love and regard. To the farmer's two daughters, stout girls of seventeen and fifteen, she also made herself very pleasant, teaching them to knit stockings and plait straw, and other handiworks, which were in vogue in the county she came from.

When the time at last arrived for Mrs. Jarvis's return to her cottage, Mrs. Maydew expressed herself really sorry to part with her, and anxious to do all in her power for her comfort, and also to assist the young gentlemen, whose kind exertions she highly applauded. She sent her daughters to arrange the sleeping-room, and see that everything was ready for her and her husband's reception.

This care on the part of the farmer's wife was most welcome to Edward and Osmond, for their mother and Helen, who had promised to assist in the final arrangements of the cottage, had been unexpectedly prevented coming.

The brothers were in a state of great excitement on this the last day of their exertions in behalf of their poor neighbours. They were very anxious that everything should be arranged in the most comfortable manner; and as the time drew on, they feared lest all should not be ready against the old people's arrival.

It had been previously arranged that Jarvis and his wife should take possession of their cottage at three o'clock that afternoon, and a little treat was to be prepared for them as a surprise. Mrs. Gordon had suggested, two or three days before, that it would be very pleasant for the old couple to find tea prepared on their arrival; and the boys, catching at the idea, determined that, if possible,

Jarvis and his wife should not return to a bare cupboard, and have immediately to make an outlay with the few shillings that remained of their share of the subscription money.

Mrs. Gordon followed up her suggestion by presenting her sons with a small canister of tea and some sugar. Mr. Gordon desired that a piece of bacon might be added to this gift; and the children, all of them, gave a trifling sum of money from their little hoards to assist in the purchase of anything that might be deemed essential to tolerable comfort.

Bessie Maydew brought with her, on the eventful day, a loaf of bread baked the afternoon before, and Kate produced from her basket half a pound of butter from a batch she had risen early that morning to make, and Joe brought a jug of nice milk for his old friends' tea.

"What a treat we shall have for them!" exclaimed Edward; "how I do wish Helen could have been here."

Hardly had he uttered these words, when he heard the click of the garden gate, and in a moment after, in ran Helen, followed by Fanny, and all the rest of the boys, except the very youngest.

"Here we are," cried she, her face beaming with pleasure; "mamma, knowing how much I wished to come, contrived that I should be set at liberty; and look," continued she, "what we have brought you,—a pot of strawberry jam made from our own gardens last summer."

"Capital!" exclaimed Edward.

"Delicious!" said Osmond, as he untied the cover, and placed the jar on the table, where a clean white cloth was already spread.

Helen began immediately to assist Bessie and Kate in

laying out the treat, while the elder boys looked on with entire satisfaction.

Fanny and the younger children were most desirous of doing something to help; and Frank reached down the plates from the shelf, where he had helped to arrange them; and Harry brought forth the knives and forks he had assisted in polishing. Fanny said she wished she could do something to be of use, and her sister told her to set the chairs round the table, while Willie amused himself with breaking some pieces of dry sticks to be thrown on the fire, to blaze up just as the old people entered.

As the time drew near, all the party grew much excited; Joe took a broom, and swept, for the second or third time, the little path that led from the gate up to the cottage; Bessie fancied she saw a minute portion of dust on the chairs, and rubbed them all over again; Kate brushed the hearth; and Helen and her brothers changed a dozen times the position of the plates and dishes and the tea-things.

At last Joe hurried in, thrust his broom into the closet, and announced that Jarvis and his wife were coming up the road.

The step of age rarely keeps pace with the impatience of youth; and "How long they are coming!" and "How slow they walk!" was repeated several times by the eager group within, before the old couple reached the cottage.

Edward stepped forward, and opening the door, extended a hand to both, saying, at the same time—

"Welcome to your home again," and "Welcome home, welcome home," was cordially repeated by each young voice, as the children looked with deep interest on the effect their return produced on their old friends.

Jarvis had already seen a great deal of what had been done for him, still he appeared much moved ; but his wife, notwithstanding all she had heard of the exertions made on her behalf, seemed quite taken by surprise.

She gazed round in wonder, and seemed hardly able to realize the idea that her home, which she knew had been almost destroyed by the flood, should wear its present, to her, delightful appearance. She passed her hand across her eyes, and said—

“ I am not in a dream, surely, no ; that is the arm-chair in which my old man has so often sat ; there stands the chest with our Sunday clothes in it. And this,” said she, raising the table-cloth, and looking underneath, “ is our old oak table.” Then almost immediately letting fall the table-cloth, she exclaimed, “ But what a goodly sight is here ! What a feast is this, and for us—for two such poor old souls ! How good ; how kind ! Oh ! John, to think of our having such friends ! ” and throwing her arms round her husband’s neck, a burst of tears relieved her full heart.

“ God has been most merciful to us in raising us up such friends,” said Jarvis, as he brushed away some heavy drops that were trickling down his cheeks. “ Let us return thanks to Him, young gentlemen,” continued he, addressing Edward and Osmond ; “ you who have been so kind to us, and you, young lady, and all present who have aided us, I am sure you will not refuse to join in our praise and thanksgiving to Him, who puts it into the hearts of men to be kind to their fellow-creatures, and who looks with love and pity on the humblest of his servants. From Him alone all our blessings flow. He is the giver of all good, and to Him it is owing that the lives of my poor wife and my-



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self were preserved, instead of being swept away by the flood, and hurried into eternity without a moment for prayer and repentance. It is by His mercy that we are now standing in our own cottage happy and contented. Ay, more, far more than contented we are here, with hearts overflowing with gratitude;" then turning to his wife, he took her hand, and said, "Let us kneel."

Edward and Osmond, followed by the rest of the party, knelt down also.

For a few moments the old man bowed his head in silence, then looking up, he broke forth into a short but fervent prayer of praise and thanksgiving.

This act of devotion over, Jarvis and his wife were invited to partake of the repast; but though Bessie made some excellent tea, and Kate placed tempting slices of bread and butter before them, the old people were too excited to eat; they just tasted their food, and then broke out into fresh praises of all around them, and renewed expressions of gratitude to their youthful friends and benefactors.

"I think," said Helen, aside, to her elder brothers, "we had better now leave them alone. Poor souls, they have experienced a variety of emotions, and must need repose."

The boys agreed with their sister, and after many kind farewells to their old friends, the juvenile party left the cottage; Edward and Osmond promising to call the next day.

The young people chatted pleasantly together till they reached the fields which led to the farm, and here they separated; the Maydews well pleased with the share they had had in the happiness conferred on the Jarvises, and

the Gordons in high spirits at the prosperous termination of their labours.

"Who would have thought," exclaimed Edward, when sitting that evening with the rest of the family, "that our holidays, which began with so much unhappiness, would have proceeded so pleasantly?"

"There is nothing like having plenty of employment," said Osmond, "for making the time pass quickly."

"Especially," said Mr. Gordon, "when that employment is of a useful character. You have both done well, my dear boys; for you have conquered difficulties, and resolutely persevered through many obstacles, which I almost feared would have deterred you from your undertaking."

"I consider, Edward," said his mother, "that you have made a great effort over yourself; and it can no longer be said, with truth, that you are deficient in perseverance."

CHAPTER XI.

It is a certain sign of an ill heart, to be inclined to defamation. * * *
 The lazy, the idle, and the froward are the persons who are most pleased with the little tales which pass about the town to the disadvantage of the rest of the world. * * * The unwillingness to receive good tidings is a quality as inseparable from a scandal-bearer, as the readiness to divulge bad.

SPECTATOR.

I dare do all that may become a man;
 Who dares do more, is none!

SHAKESPEARE

HUGH WYLD had greatly exaggerated all that had been said respecting the employment of Edward and Osmond at the cottage; for at the time he spoke few persons knew of

the brothers being so occupied, and of those few, some praised and some condemned them.

Stoneleigh, like other large towns, had a mixed class of inhabitants. By one set, and also by a few families in the neighbourhood, Mrs. Gordon was highly respected; but with the gossips of the town she was no favourite.

She never had any ill-natured story to tell, and even seemed uneasy under any unpleasant remarks that were made upon any of the neighbours. Indeed, so far from joining in them, she would seek for excuses for the conduct of those who were blamed; and often, by the kind constructions she put upon their actions, would give a favourable turn to public opinion.

Among the most determined gossips of Stoneleigh, were Mrs. Freeman, a widow, and her unmarried sister, Miss Marvell. Gossip was the chief pleasure of these ladies' lives; it might also be said that it was their sole occupation. They were the most indefatigable purveyors of news, and circulated from house to house a variety of reports, sometimes true and sometimes false, with a diligence worthy of a better cause. It was a common remark with people living in the neighbourhood, that they never went to Stoneleigh without meeting Mrs. Freeman and Miss Marvell, either in the streets or at the house of some person or other where they chanced to call.

With individuals such as these, the event of two young gentlemen repairing a poor man's cottage was not likely long to remain a secret; and the circumstance not according with their notions of propriety, they condemned, in forcible terms, both the parents who allowed it, and the boys, who could act in a way so inconsistent with the manner in which they had been brought up, and their station in life.

"It is true," said Mrs. Freeman, after she and her sister had exhausted their stock of epithets of ungentlemanly, vulgar, lowlived, &c., "that the Gordons have suffered a reverse of fortune, and very likely the boys will have to get their living as carpenters and bricklayers."

"And this," observed Miss Marvel, "is most likely a sort of apprenticeship to their trades."

"Good!" exclaimed Mrs. Freeman; "a bright idea! How witty you always are, Arabella; you always give such a lively turn to things!"

And the two ladies took leave in haste of the party on whom they had first called, to hurry off to another house, and then another and another, to tell of the strange doings of the Gordon boys.

Mrs. Freeman and Miss Marvel had never liked Mrs. Gordon; her quiet lady-like manners and dignified reserve, whenever they attempted to draw her into their gossiping tales, somewhat awed them; and now and then an observation, which seemed accidentally to fall from her, appeared to make them feel the littleness of their favourite occupation. In revenge, they called her stiff and proud.

At one of the houses where the sisters called, they met a lady to whom their tale seemed to afford no amusement. She did not, she said, know a great deal of the Gordon family, not living within visiting distance; but what little she had seen of them she liked; and she did not think it probable that the parents would consent, or the boys be willing, to do anything disgraceful.

The ladies finding they did not make the impression they wished, shifted their ground, and said, the boys were not at all like what they thought boys ought to be.

"They are so quiet," said Mrs. Freeman; "they have no spirit."

"They are what I call *tame* boys," said Miss Marvell; and she got up a little laugh.

"They will never know how to conduct themselves when they grow up to be men," said Mrs. Freeman.

"No," interrupted Miss Marvell; "for if they are asked to go anywhere, or to do anything, it is always, 'if papa will give leave;' or, 'if mamma approves.'"

"And yet," observed another lady of the company, who had hitherto not taken any part in the conversation, "I think these boys are occasionally left to act for themselves; indeed, I am sure of it; for I remember last summer,—it was at the time of the races,—that Mr. Gordon was not very well pleased with his second son, for something or other he had been doing.

"'You know,' said he to the boy, 'I often wish you, in a case of this kind, to judge for yourself; but then, I expect you will reflect before you act; now here you could not have thought at all of what you were about to do.'"

"Yes," interposed Miss Marvell; "and how did the boy behave? Instead of defending himself, and endeavouring to prove he had done what was right, he looked quite concerned; and when his father had finished speaking, he said,

"'I am sorry I have done so; I will endeavour to do better another time!' Poor craven youth!"

"I like boys to have spirit," said Mrs. Freeman.

"Spirit like the Wylds, for instance," said Miss Marvell. "What fine, dashing lads they are! Up to anything—bold and dauntless!"

"I do not think," said the first-mentioned lady, rising to take her leave, "that good principles and obedience to

parents at all interfere with the manliness of a boy's character; on the contrary, true courage, and an undaunted spirit, are chiefly found among those who have been blessed with kind and watchful parents."

The difference of character in the boys who formed the subject of these ladies' conversation, was forcibly exemplified during a morning walk, a few days after the Gordons had completed their labours at the cottage.

As Edward and Osmond were on their way to meet their father, on his return from a neighbouring village, they were joined by Hugh and Peter Wyld. There was but little sympathy between these boys, and they had not much in common as to tastes and pursuits; still, as neighbours' children, they were often thrown together. Peter was the most inoffensive of the two; and the Gordons, who had learned of their parents to try, by example, and occasionally by precept, to extract what was good, and to repel what was bad in their associates, hoped at times that he might turn out well.

But the constant companionship and counsel of his older brother rendered such expectation almost hopeless. Hugh was half a year older than Edward, and might have been equally clever; but time wasted, and abilities neglected, placed a wide difference between the two, and while one bid fair to distinguish himself, and become an ornament to society, the other was treading the path that leads to obscurity, and too often to dishonour. Both the brothers went to a public school, and were now at home for the holidays; but their company brought no pleasure with it. Rude and disrespectful to their mother, and disobeying their father whenever they could, the family circle possessed no charms for them, and home, when

they visited it, was a scene of perpetual discord and discomfort.

The Gordons were frequently held up to them by their parents as patterns to admire and imitate; but in the perverse minds of their sons, a very different feeling from emulation was awakened; for the praises bestowed upon Edward and Osmond too often only excited envy and dislike, and nothing gave them more pleasure than to be able to find cause for disparagement, or reason for condemning the conduct of their young neighbours.

Hugh had seen Edward once or twice since the evening when they met at the cottage; but as he could not succeed in mortifying him concerning his labours there, he ceased to mention the subject, especially as it gave rise to observations, on the part of Edward, respecting the duty of helping our fellow-creatures in distress, which were not very agreeable to Hugh to hear.

The boys had not proceeded far before they came to a railway bridge, the wooden railing belonging to which was continued along the side of the road for some distance.

In a moment Hugh Wyld dashed on to the railing, ran up it, past over the coping of the bridge, and came down on the other side, where he awaited the approach of his companions. He looked flushed and excited, for the feat he had just performed was certainly one of no ordinary kind, the railing over which he had run being of a penthouse form, and slippery from hoar frost.

"Do that!" exclaimed Hugh, exultingly, to Edward, "do that!" and on receiving no reply, for Edward was for a moment silent from the thought of the danger the youth had exposed himself to, he continued,

"You dare not do it!"

"I am glad," said Edward, "to see you safe after so dangerous an exploit."

"Nonsense," cried Hugh; "do not talk of danger."

"You ran a great risk," said Edward, gravely, "of being killed, or dangerously hurt, if your foot had slipped, and you had fallen below. Great part of the railing passes over the railroad."

"Pooh, pooh!" cried Hugh, "try it yourself, try it;" then changing his tone, he said, jeeringly, "no, no, you would not do what I have done for the world; you would be far too much afraid of your precious self."

"I do not know that fear for myself is the restraining motive, but I certainly shall not attempt what you ask me to do," replied Edward.

"You have not courage enough," cried Hugh.

"If," said Edward, without noticing this taunt, "I could, by performing the feat you have just accomplished, save the life of any of my fellow-creatures, or even confer an essential benefit on them, I would not hesitate to do what you ask; but, under the present circumstances, I see no necessity for doing what I consider to be a very foolish thing."

"The truth is, you are afraid," said Hugh.

Edward was silent.

"Or perhaps," said Peter Wyld, mockingly, "you are afraid of mamma, and——"

"You are quite right there," interrupted Edward, with quickness, "I *am* afraid as regards her. Should I fall and injure myself, besides the sorrow I know her love for me would cause her to feel, I should occasion her a great deal of trouble and fatigue in attending upon me."

"Bravo!" exclaimed Hugh, "what an ingenious excuse; but it will not do, man; it does not throw dust in my eyes."

"Come," said Peter, "do it at once; show you are not afraid," and he tried to push Edward forward.

Edward remained firmly on the spot where he was standing.

"Coward!" said Hugh, and he turned away in affected disgust.

At this moment Mr. Gordon appeared, and the party bent their steps homewards, Mr. Gordon being made acquainted, on the way, with what had just passed.

Hugh exulted loudly in the feat he had performed, and endeavoured to acquire from it great importance in the eyes of Mr. Gordon. At the same time he sought to disparage Edward, and did not hesitate to tax him with cowardice, even before his father.

Mr. Gordon condemned Hugh's exploit as rash and foolish in the extreme.

"You may say what you please, sir," said Hugh, "but what I have done shows a very brave spirit."

"I am not certain of that," replied Mr. Gordon; "there are such things as true courage and false, and I trust my boys would not be deficient in the better kind, were occasion to offer."

Hardly had Mr. Gordon uttered these words, when Edward, starting from his side, rushed down the bank of the causeway on which they were walking, and threw himself into the middle of the road, right in front of a heavily-loaded waggon, drawn by eight horses, two abreast. The foremost horses knocked him down, but stepping over without hurting him, Edward was seen to push something

on one side, and before the waggon-wheels reached him, he had drawn himself out of any danger of being crushed by them.

The screams of a woman, and Edward approaching her with a child in his arms, explained what had passed. The little creature had crawled from its mother's cottage into the middle of the road, and would doubtless have been killed by the waggon passing over it, if Edward had not espied it, and at the risk of his own life rushed to its rescue.

The action had been so sudden, that every one was taken by surprise; even the Master Wylds stood aghast at the imminent peril in which Edward had placed himself; Osmond uttered a loud cry of distress; while the dreadfully agitated father trembled from head to foot.

"My dearest boy!" said Mr. Gordon, as Edward, though looking pale, advanced with a firm step, and took his father's extended hand—"my dearest boy, are you hurt?"

"Not in the least, thank you; I am not at all hurt; I was only afraid I should not be able to save the child."

"It is Greenfield's little boy, is it not?" said Osmond.

"Yes," replied his brother; "it would have been a dreadful thing if he had been killed; they have lost so many of their children."

"Poor little fellow," said Osmond; "I was looking out for him as we approached his father's cottage."

"So was I," said Edward, "and not seeing him, as usual, on the door-step, I looked round, and in the road I espied my little gentleman."

Mr. Gordon was still too much agitated to take any part in the conversation, but pressing with warmth the

arm of his son as it rested on his own, he walked on in silence till they reached the entrance-gate of his house, when, bidding Hugh and Peter Wyld good morning, he said,

"I think, young gentlemen, we have had an excellent practical example to-day of true courage and foolhardiness."

CHAPTER XII.

And gladly would he learn, and gladly teach.

CHAUCER.

I believe it is best to throw life into a method, that every hour may bring its employment, and every employment have its hour.

DR. JOHNSON.

MR. GORDON had distinguished himself at school and college, and his love of literature led him, notwithstanding the duties of his profession, to keep up his classical attainments. He was, therefore, no inapt tutor for his sons, and after the Christmas holidays were over, he devoted a few hours every day to the instruction of his two elder boys.

Edward and Osmond were such diligent scholars, and were, moreover, so docile, that it very much lessened the fatigue of teaching. Mr. Gordon would gladly have added Allen and Trevor to the number of his pupils, but this the present state of his health forbid. He was lamenting one day his inability to continue the instruction he had formerly given to these boys, and regretting that they would lose all they knew, when Edward said he thought he was capable of teaching them, and would undertake to do so if his father approved of it.

Mr. Gordon replied, that he did not doubt Edward's

capability of teaching, but he feared that he would find it so irksome a task, that he would not have patience to persevere; besides, he represented to his son, that, by devoting a good deal of time to his younger brothers, he would be abridging his own leisure hours, and depriving himself of much enjoyment. "No," continued he, "I must endeavour to instruct them myself."

"My dear father," exclaimed Edward, his eyes beaming with affection as he spoke, "can you doubt that I would not give up any pleasure to assist you, and spare you from fatigue, for which you are at present so unfit?"

"And do you not yourself," said Osmond, who was present, "give up hours of your own time every day for Edward's and my benefit? Oh! I am sure the very thought of that will make my brother a good tutor. And, papa," continued he, with animation, "cannot I teach Frank and Harry? I will be very patient, and instruct them in all I have learned myself. Will you let me, papa? I think it would be a help, for it would prepare them for wiser instructors who would come after me."

Mr. Gordon was much gratified by this instance of his sons' affection and desire to assist him, and he agreed to a trial being made of their powers as teachers, and certain hours were fixed upon for the younger boys receiving instruction from the elder.

It was arranged, that while Edward was receiving his daily lesson from his father, Osmond should be occupied in teaching his two pupils; and that when Osmond took his turn of instruction from Mr. Gordon, Allen and Trevor should be learning of Edward.

Edward and Osmond found their task at first far more troublesome than they had imagined, not so much from

any difficulty they had in imparting instruction, but as to the restraint it imposed, both as to regularity and self-command.

Allen was very lively and full of fun, and Edward often had a difficulty in fixing his attention, and now and then forgetting the dignity of a teacher, he fell into his brother's playful ways, and the time appointed for study slipped away in sport. Trevor would now and then think he knew best, and Edward, instead of patiently proving he was in error, would take up a book, and, lost in the interest it excited, entirely forget his pupil.

Osmond was all energy, and when Frank did not get on as fast as he wished and expected, he got excited and impatient, and his little scholar sometimes left the room with flushed cheeks, and eyes swimming in tears.

Harry he pronounced to be dull at figures, because, after a month's instruction, he had not been able to get farther than easy sums in long division.

Notwithstanding this somewhat unsatisfactory beginning, after a time the business of instruction proceeded very well. Edward and Osmond had only to look at their father's pallid countenance, and witness his declining strength, to make them determine to persevere steadily in their duty. Mr. Gordon, too, put his sons into a proper mode of teaching, and advising the exercise of a greater degree of patience, cautioned them against expecting too much.

"The boys," said he, "are none of them deficient in abilities, and have a desire to improve; you may therefore rest assured that their progress in learning, however slow it may appear to you, will be certain."

A great relief in the burden of teaching was also af-

forded by Helen's offering to instruct Trevor, Frank, and Harry in arithmetic; she was a good accountant herself, and had a happy method of teaching. Allen she begged to decline as a pupil, for though farther advanced than he was, she said he was so full of fun that he would put all her soberest calculations to flight.

Every one of the family was fully employed. The servants had all long since gone away, with the exception of Agnes, and she was so slow and so dull of comprehension, that she was of no great assistance, except in the most laborious part of the household work, which, under the direction of her mistress, she was able to perform; besides, great part of her time was passed out of doors in attending upon the youngest child.

This child, a little boy of three years old, had been exceedingly ill, and continued so delicate that he could not walk. There was some fear that he might never recover the use of his limbs; but in order to give him the best chance of doing so, the medical man who attended him desired that he might be taken, every fine day, on to a common, half a mile off, and kept in the bracing air for an hour or two.

This part of Agnes's duty was so pleasing to her, that she often staid out double the time she ought to have been absent. One day, Frank, who with Harry, used to be constantly following Mrs. Gordon about, and rendering her such little assistance as children of their age were capable of affording, said,

"It is a pity, mamma, that Agnes has to go to the common every day with Charley; you have so much more to do when she is away, that you get very tired. Why cannot Frank and I draw our little brother out in his

chaise; we could take him up to the common, and be quite as careful of him as Agnes?"

"Do you think you could, my dear?" replied Mrs. Gordon; "were it safe to let you and Harry have the charge of the child, it would be a great assistance to me, for Helen and I have often more to do than we can well accomplish."

"Mrs. Baker, mamma," said Frank, "and Mrs. Brown, let their children take care of the little ones, and carry them off to the common; and Johnny Baker is not older than I am, and George Brown is half a year younger."

"Indeed, mamma, you may trust us," said Harry, eagerly seconding his brother's views; "you know we always do as you bid us."

"And if I do let you have the care of little Charley," said Mrs. Gordon, "I may rely on your keeping straight along the path, and not crossing the road, and returning exactly at the time I desire you; you can hear the church clock strike the hour."

"Indeed, mamma, you may trust us," said Frank, proudly.

"I really believe I may," said his mamma; "I always find you obedient to my orders."

From that day Frank and Harry took charge of the little invalid, thus setting Agnes at liberty, and very much lessening their mamma's fatigue. And Mrs. Gordon had no cause to repent the confidence she reposed in her young sons; for they, proud of being trusted, and desirous of doing what was right, were strictly obedient to the orders they had received.

"What a blessing it is," said Mrs. Gordon, when speaking to her husband of the service Frank and Harry

rendered her, "when children can be depended upon; and parents feel assured that they will not do out of their sight what they would not do before their eyes."

"Yes," replied Mr. Gordon; "and our little boys, young as they are, help, by their good behaviour, to make home comfortable."

CHAPTER XIII.

Ah, earth! what hast thou more beautiful than the love of those whose ties are knit by nature, and whose union seems destined to begin from the very moment of their birth!

BULWER.

While on their useful works
From day to day intent, in their full minds
Evil no place can find. * * *
* * * Eager for their work, they haste
With warm affection to each other's aid,
Repeat their virtuous efforts, and succeed.

DYER.

A Christian she,
In the full sense of that deep-meaning word.

W. H. MARDEN.

The childlike faith, that asks not sight,
Waits not for wonder, or for sign,
Believes, because it loves aright.

KEBLE.

In order to avoid as much as possible the bustle and confusion attendant upon a change of residence, Mrs. Gordon had taken the precaution to sort out and pack, from time to time, the chief part of those articles which were to be transported to Myrtle Cottage. By this arrangement she hoped to spare her husband, whose health was very indifferent, much that was painful and fatiguing. Helen was a great assistance to her; and she, in her turn, called in the aid of her brothers, particularly when a little more strength than she possessed was necessary; and in the completion of the packing, Edward and Osmond were of

essential service. They nailed up boxes and corded trunks, and thus spared the expense of hiring a man to do it.

The boys were all glad when they could assist their mother, and save her trouble; and between the sisters and brothers great love and harmony subsisted.

Among the earliest of the lessons Mr. Gordon taught his boys, was that of being gentle, respectable, and kind, to the female part of the family. He never permitted the least rudeness towards them, and enforced the propriety of behaving to their own mother and sisters with the same consideration and politeness that they would show to strange ladies.

This, as well as all his other training, he began when the children were young. In the nursery the boys were never permitted to tease or tyrannize over their sisters; and the time Mr. Gordon was known to be the most angry, was when one of the youngest boys, in a fit of passion, struck little Fanny.

Brothers and sisters are friends born to each other.

Great pains are often taken to make friends abroad, when, were half the care and pains exercised at home, the sincerest interest and the warmest affections would be secured, without fear of change, in these whom nature has pointed out to us to make choice of as our best friends.

How greatly is the peace and comfort of home often interfered with by the quarrels of boys with their sisters. It seems as though they took a delight in teasing them; and often taking advantage of their superior bodily strength, they cause them serious annoyance. And still more blamable is the behaviour of some sons to their mothers. Forgetful of God's commands, and in defiance of sense and propriety, how often do boys disobey the orders

of their mothers and treat their admonitions with contempt.

But to return to the great event of moving house. Myrtle Cottage, till within a fortnight of the time the Gordon family were to enter there, had been occupied by a not very desirable tenant, namely, a gouty old gentleman, who had no taste for gardening, and who was at no pains to keep the place nice, or even comfortable.

Mr. and Mrs. Gordon, on looking over their future residence, found that it had been much neglected. In many places paling was broken, gates were off their hinges, and a general want of care was everywhere evident. Inside the house, the paper was dirtied, and the paint knocked off the doors; and there were several small damages, which a hammer and nails, had they been timely used, would have repaired. But the part of the property which most painfully showed neglect was the garden.

Mrs. Gordon took great delight in a well-ordered garden, and superintending the one she was about to leave had been a favourite recreation with her. She had latterly looked forward to the enjoyment of the garden at her new residence as a solace for many an hour of toil and anxiety, and the disappointment she now experienced was considerable.

The garden had not been cropped; and some stray pigs having been carelessly suffered to enter, had rooted up many of the flowering plants, and injured several of the rosetrees and tender shrubs.

"There is plenty more work for us," said Osmond gaily to Edward, when they were alone together, on retiring for the night, and were talking over the uncomfortable state of things at Myrtle Cottage, which they had visited that day in company with their parents.

"You are right," replied Edward; "we must now set about helping papa and mamma with as much zeal as we did the Jarvises. Our love for our parents will give even greater zest to the employment."

"We shall not find it such hard work," observed Osmond, "as the cottage; but, as was the case there, we have very little time."

"I will tell you what we must do," said Edward; "we must rise very early, and get our younger brothers' lessons over, and then we shall have long days."

"You forget our own," said Osmond.

Edward looked grave for a minute, then exclaimed, "I have got over that difficulty; we will ask papa to attend to us in the evening; I am sure he will, when he knows what we want to do in the daytime. How lucky that the days are so much longer now!"

"I shall not be able to sleep," exclaimed Osmond, "till I know whether that time will suit papa; but," said he, checking himself, "we do not yet know whether he and mamma will consent to our doing what we propose."

"No doubt of that, I think," replied his brother; "but let us run down directly, and set our minds at ease. You know mamma long ago talked of our being her young gardeners; and we are not going to thatch another roof, and build a chimney again, for Miss Marvell to talk of."

"I wish we were, if that was all, to astonish her still more," cried Osmond; "and I believe we all hold her opinions in much the same estimation as I do."

"It always makes mamma laugh," said Edward, "when I talk of what she said about us."

Mr. and Mrs. Gordon willingly gave their consent to their sons' proposal of doing all in their power to make

the future residence of themselves and family more comfortable, and also to their doing their best to put the garden in order ; neither had Mr. Gordon any objection to changing the time for the instruction of his boys, as it set him more at liberty to attend to some affairs of his own, preparatory to the sale, and ultimately quitting the house. He wished, assisted by some of the younger boys, to pack the books, and it was necessary for him to remove, himself, an accumulation of writings and papers from a bureau and drawers, preparatory to the sale of the furniture and other effects.

The energetic boys did not close their eyes that night till they had planned all they would do to render the villa and the garden a more fitting and pleasant residence for their beloved parents. The first thing they settled to be done was to paint the doors. Their late servant James had laid in a large stock of paints, and the ingredients for mixing them. These Edward knew where to look for, and how to use, for he had often watched the man in his work, and had many times coaxed him into letting him "do a little painting." The paper, they agreed, might be made cleaner by rubbing with bread, and the little carpenter's work Osmond declared would soon be done.

The out-door part of the business was not so easily disposed of. Not but what the gates could soon be put right, they said ; but then there was that paling, which was so very much broken, and without that was thoroughly repaired, the garden would be open to depredation ; and to have the garden nicely arranged, and put in perfect order, seemed even more important than anything else.

Edward said that they could transplant many of the rose-trees that had been planted by their family in the garden

they were going to leave, as well as an abundance of young plants, both culinary and ornamental, which had been sown very early in the spring for this purpose; besides some that been grown the autumn before.

"Poor mamma," said Edward, "I fancied she looked quite sad to see such a ruined garden."

"We will have the garden nice for her," said Osmond, with energy, "whatever else goes undone; I only wish I was there now. I will just step to Frank and Harry, and you had better go to Allen and Trevor, and tell them to be sure and be up early to-morrow for their lessons."

"Do you not think," returned his brother, "that you stand a better chance of having them up in good time in the morning, if you do not go and disturb them out of their repose?"

"Perhaps I should," said Osmond; "and as I am just now taken exceedingly sleepy myself, I will say good night."

As Myrtle Cottage was not more than half a mile off, the boys, masters and pupils, were able, after lessons, to take a run there, and be back in time for family prayers and breakfast.

Edward carried the paints, and each of the young party conveyed something or other that would be wanted in the work to be performed.

On their return home, they found that Helen, who had also risen very early, had brushed and mended the coats Edward and Osmond had worn when employed at Jarvis's cottage, as she thought they would be wanted on the present occasion. This forethought on the part of their sister was of much service to the boys, as it relieved them from the trouble of taking care of their clothes while working at the villa.

Just as the boys were ready to start, Joe and Bessie Maydew, who had come on an errand to the village, called to inquire after Miss Helen and the young gentlemen. Edward availed himself of this opportune arrival to get Joe to carry a ladder for him, and Bessie was requested to purchase some stale bread at a little shop they passed, for the purpose of cleaning the paper. This she readily did, and knowing for what it was wanted, had it cut into the proper-shaped pieces; and when she brought it in, she greatly assisted Osmond and the other boys in what they considered the most disagreeable part of their employment.

In the mean time Edward was painting the doors, and having found some white paint among James's stores, he decided upon painting the skirting-board of the drawing-room, which would give it a much nicer appearance. Osmond wished to be painting too; it was "such pleasant work;" but he did not press the matter, as he knew Edward, who was so exceedingly neat in everything he did, would accomplish the affair much better than himself.

As soon as the first coating of paint had been laid on, Edward, leaving it to dry, went into the garden to see about repairing the paling. Here he was followed by his brothers as soon as the cleaning of the drawing-room paper was finished. The dining-room and breakfast parlour were stuccoed, and Bessie Maydew, before she went, kindly promised to come the next day with her sister, and wash the walls of these two rooms. All the boys went to work with vigour in the garden; some putting the ground in order, and some assisting Edward in the repair of the fences, which consisted chiefly of a light wooden paling.

Getting the paling secure was a most important part

of the business, as there could be no transplanting of shrubs and vegetables till this was done, for fear of inroads from stray sheep or pigs.

In many places the paling was so much broken, that Edward had to supply its place with new; and he and Osmond were employed a great part of that day and of many others, in cutting and sawing fresh wood into shape.

Allen and Trevor could not often be spared from home, but when they were, Trevor hastened off to the garden, where he worked with the vigour of one pursuing a favourite employment. Fortunately for so young a labourer, the soil was very light, and this was also advantageous to Frank and Harry, whenever they came, and, under Trevor's direction, hoed and raked the beds and flower-borders.

Allen made himself useful in a variety of ways, sometimes in the house and sometimes out of doors.

Bessie and Kate Maydew did not forget their promise, and when the paint was dry they came again, and made themselves very useful in assisting Agnes in thoroughly cleaning all the rooms. Joe, too, contrived, one or two evenings, to escape from the business of the farm, when the boys availed themselves of his greater strength to assist in mending those portions of the gates which were broken.

Thus Edward and his brothers, without doing anything derogatory to their characters as young gentlemen, were the means of making a great saving in the narrow income of their parents.

One afternoon, as Osmond was hastening off to the villa, where he had been prevented going before by a little

business at home, Trevor called him to accompany him into the garden.

"I have something to show you," said he, as he led his brother up to a cucumber-frame, where on pushing the glass aside, he displayed a crop of very fine cauliflower plants.

"I have raised these," continued he, "myself, on purpose that papa, whose appetite is so indifferent, may have his favourite vegetable this summer."

"The young plants look very flourishing," said Osmond; "and, I suppose, are ready for transplanting."

"Yes," replied his brother, "but I kept them back till the paling was finished. The weather is so mild just now, I wish they could be put in directly. I cannot be spared myself, but if the fences are all secure, I would pull them up, and you should take them with you this afternoon."

"The paling will be finished to-day, I know," replied Osmond; "Edward said yesterday, he had but one day's more work at it."

"That being the case, then," said Trevor, "you shall have them directly;" and with strict injunctions as to carefulness, and directions where they were to be put, he delivered his choice plants to Osmond, who, highly pleased with such an acquisition to the kitchen garden, hastened off to the villa. On arriving there, he showed the plants with great satisfaction to Edward, who was working at the paling.

Edward admired them, but told his brother they must not be planted that day, as he should not have completed the fence round the garden. Osmond was disappointed, and said the plants would be spoiled; but this, Edward

assured him, would not be the case, and advised his brother to lay them in the cellar. This delay did not at all suit Osmond's impatience, and he urged his brother to complete his work; but Edward replied that he wanted a change of occupation, and was going to make two or three little repairs in the house which he had previously overlooked; and while Osmond was still standing irresolute, with his bundle of plants under his arm, his brother had gathered together his tools, and walked away.

Osmond continued for some time to debate the matter in his mind. It would be very vexatious, certainly, thought he, if anything were to happen to Trevor's plants; but then, on the other hand, he reflected that ever since he and his brothers had been working in the garden, no pigs had made their appearance, and it was a most unlikely thing that they would fix on this very night to come, and when the fences, too, were all but finished. So Osmond determined to plant the young cauliflowers, and he went about his work with as much care as Trevor could possibly have desired, making the holes exactly the proper depth, and setting the plants at the precise distance it was required that they should be from each other, till a bed, beautiful in order and regularity, appeared before his well-pleased eyes. He wished Trevor could behold it. Edward, he knew, was gone home, for he had called to him before he went, to say that his father had sent for him to return directly, and that Osmond was to follow soon, as dinner was ordered at an earlier hour than usual.

Osmond had been so deeply engaged, that the time had passed quicker than he imagined, and when he reached home, dinner was begun; but no notice was taken of his tardiness, as every one was busy talking of the approach-

ing sale; and after dinner, not being wanted, he took the opportunity of running off to see how the plants looked, and to give them a little more water, as he fancied that, owing to the hurry he was latterly in, he had not supplied them with sufficient moisture.

With eager haste he sped along the road, fearing the daylight would depart before he achieved his object, but by the time he arrived at the garden-gate, everything was still plainly to be seen; too plainly, alas! for, as he turned into the path that led to the kitchen-garden, a hideous object met his view, namely, a large pig, who, with satisfied grunt, was moving away from the cauliflower-bed, where it had made a delicious repast on the tender young plants lately placed there with so much care.

Angrily driving the animal away, Osmond rushed up to the bed, and there beheld the havoc that had been made; not a trace of the green leaves remained, and the ground had been turned up to get at the roots, so entire had been the work of destruction.

Osmond stood fixed to the spot; he could hardly believe what he saw, so sudden was the change. He was exceedingly vexed, and snatching up a stick that lay on the path, he ran in search of the pig, to revenge himself on it for the mischief it had done, and the pain it had caused him; but the pig eluded his pursuit, and just as he got up to it, it was retreating through a hole in the paling, that separated the bottom of the garden from a retired green lane.

"Ah!" said he to himself, "if Edward would but have finished the paling, this accident would not have happened;" and he turned disconsolately away, and slowly retracing his steps homeward, meditated, as he went, upon

the disappointment he should cause Trevor by what he had to tell him. Osmond thought he would inform him of the destruction of his highly-prized plants by himself, but finding, on his return to the house, that the family were assembled at tea, he rushed at once into the room and told his tale.

Trevor was exceedingly sorry ; for it was a very great disappointment to him, that the plants he had been at infinite pains to rear, should be thus destroyed.

He stated, as well as he could for tears, how he had watched these cherished plants, how he had gone night and morning, and many times in the day, to let in air, or to close the frame, and that he had intended to give his papa such treats of what he liked so much.

Osmond said that Trevor could not be more sorry than he was, and every one consoled with the poor boy.

One of the party said fresh seed could be sown ; but this suggestion was met with a renewed burst of sorrow, and an exclamation of " No, no ; it is too late, and we shall have no frames at the villa ! "

" It is all Edward's fault," said Osmond, who was feeling very uncomfortable.

" My fault ! " repeated Edward, warmly.

" Yes," replied Osmond, " it was owing to your not finishing the paling. If, instead of going to something fresh, you would have kept on——"

" If you would not have been so impatient," interrupted Edward, " and have waited, as I told you, till to-morrow, Trevor's plants would not have been destroyed."

" But who would ever have thought of that pig coming in just as he did ? " said Osmond, a good deal disconcerted by having the true cause of the disaster brought home to him.

"He was doubtless a pig of discrimination and good taste," said Allen, "and smelt out the dainties you had prepared for him."

"You need not make a joke of my trouble," said Osmond, with irritation. "I wish I could kill the pig, that I do;" and pushing back his chair, he rose, and hastily left the room.

In about half an hour Osmond returned, with a penitent countenance, and holding out his hand to Edward, said—

"I beg your pardon; vexation made me hasty and unjust; I have been thinking the matter over by myself, and I see clearly that it was I, and not you, who was to blame." And passing on to his seat, he laid his hand good-humouredly on Allen's shoulder, saying, "Never mind, Allen; you must have your joke, I know."

"I did not mean to be ill-natured, I assure you," said Allen.

"No, that I am sure you did not," replied his brother.

"That is right, boys," said Mr. Gordon; "love one another, and be at peace among yourselves—that always lessens a trouble, while a contrary behaviour only increases it. When an unpleasant event occurs," continued he, "like that which has just happened, it is of no use reproaching the person who has caused it. It is very different from a temperate examination as to the circumstances of the case; from such a proceeding benefit generally arises. In the present instance, we shall find, that if either Edward or Osmond had exerted themselves to overcome the fault peculiar to their respective characters, Trevor would not have lost his plants, and a great deal of annoyance been spared."

Edward and Osmond looked attentively at their father, and he continued—

“I was at the villa at noon to-day, and seeing there was not a great deal more to be done to complete the repairs of the paling, I advised its being finished off at once.”

“You praised my diligence, papa,” said Edward, in a deprecatory tone.

“I did so,” replied Mr. Gordon; “and I should have commended you still more if you had persevered in your work till it was finished, instead of, when it was just completed, running off to something else.”

“I wish I had,” sighed Edward.

“And if you, Osmond,” said Mr. Gordon, “had exercised a little patience, and had delayed only till the next day what you were desirous of doing, no ill consequence would have arisen. You must endeavour to conquer the desire you have to do everything the moment the fancy takes you. You must acquire the power of reflecting before you act. Acting upon impulse too often leads us into error. When you arrive at man’s estate, and are the uncontrolled master of your own actions, you will find this, to your cost, to be the case, if you do not in youth acquire the habit of reflecting before you act. I know you to be very humane to the brute creation, and I do not believe you would have killed the animal who caused you so much vexation in simply following the dictates of its instinct, even if you had been ten times more angry; still, the feeling that prompted you to say that you would do so, ought to be reflected on, and serve as a warning against giving way, even in words, to hasty feelings.”

Edward and Osmond listened to their father’s admo-

nitions with respectful attention. They were concerned that they had not acted more wisely, and promised amendment for the future; they felt sorry also that they had shown an unpleasant temper towards each other. But this last circumstance was of very rare occurrence, and that, perhaps, made it the more felt when anything chanced to interrupt the harmony of their intercourse.

No two brothers ever lived more happily together than they did, or loved each other more affectionately.

That night, before retiring to rest, Edward and Osmond sought to be alone with their mother, for they wished to enjoy the soothing effects of her conversation. For a long time they remained with her, listening to her gentle counsels, and discoursing with her upon the peculiarities of their characters, and in considering the best way of overcoming their defects.

Words of commendation occasionally fell from the lips of the tender mother as she talked, which cheered and encouraged her sons; for nothing was more highly prized by them than her praise and approbation.

Above all, she now, as ever, sought to impress on their minds the duty of seeking from their best Friend, their Father in Heaven, the strength to enable them to do right. She enforced the necessity of prayer for His assistance, and repeated that, without His aid and holy guidance, the best endeavours and wisest resolutions of man are of no avail.

Both Edward and Osmond were fully impressed with the importance of religion, and besides joining in family prayer, they had the habit of praying by themselves in the solitude of their own chamber.

The prayers of the two brothers, like their characters, were very different.

Edward, in his approaches to the Supreme Being, addressed Him with the utmost awe and reverence, and often remained long in the contemplation of His majesty and glory. So grand and sublime did the Deity appear to him, that it was one of the hardest trials of his faith to bring himself to believe that such petty concerns as the worldly cares and business of man's every-day life should be regarded by Him.

It was owing to this, perhaps, that Edward was apt to rely too much on himself, and was not sufficiently impressed with his utter and entire dependence on his Maker.

With Osmond, the act of prayer was an entire reposal of himself upon God. Notwithstanding his impetuous nature, in his moments of devotion his humility was of the most perfect kind. His trust and his love were unbounded. Often, when dwelling on the mercy, the goodness, the pitying love of the Almighty towards his creatures, and of the atonement made for sinful man by our blessed Redeemer, the tears would start to his eyes, and his heart would throb with emotions of the deepest love and gratitude. Osmond's religion was that of love.

CHAPTER XIV.

Music the fiercest grief can charm,
And fate's severest rage disarm;
Music can soften pain to ease;

* * * *

Our joys below it can improve,
And antedate the bliss above.

POPE.

We get accustomed in an incredibly short time to the most violent changes; and calamities that seem insupportable when viewed from a distance, lose half their power if met and resisted with fortitude.—COOPER.

THE sale went off well, for sufficient money was raised by it to pay all the bills; and Mr. and Mrs. Gordon had the satisfaction when they left their large house, of not owing a single shilling to any one. Enough furniture remained to render the villa comfortable, and even a few pictures and ornamental articles were left, to give an air of elegance to one or two of the rooms.

Farmer Maydew lent his horse and cart, and offered the services of his son Joe to assist in moving, which was a considerable saving of expense. He would have come himself, but business of importance called him another way.

Notwithstanding the precaution Mrs. Gordon had taken to be beforehand in packing and other arrangements, when the day at last arrived for moving, there was a great deal to do, and a great bustle, and some confusion. The younger children were all life and spirits, and enjoyed the commotion exceedingly, running about to carry parcels to the cart, tumbling over each other, and getting in their own and everybody's way. Helen contrived, without too much checking their enjoyment, to bring them into tolerable order; while the elder boys, under the direction of their parents, made themselves exceedingly useful.

Mrs. Gordon, with her elder sons, was at the villa when the furniture for the upper rooms arrived, in order that she might see to the disposition of it herself. It was an affair of no small difficulty, the accommodating comfortably so large a family as hers in such a comparatively small house. She would have been rejoiced to have had all her children well lodged; but this she found would be impossible; and she was regretting to Edward and Osmond the very indifferent accommodation which they would have, when Edward exclaimed—

“Do not concern yourself the least in the world, dear mamma, about Osmond’s and my apartment, for we have made our own selection.”

Mrs. Gordon looked surprised.

“You are astonished, mamma!” said Edward, “but it is true;” and he and his brother laughed, and cried out at the same time, “The loft.”

“You do not mean the hay-loft, my dears, over the stable?” said Mrs. Gordon.

“Indeed we do, mamma,” said Edward.

“And a most commodious place it will be,” exclaimed Osmond; “plenty of room there!”

“You can spare us something to lie upon,” said Edward; “or for the matter of that, a truss of straw will do. I may not get so good a bed as that even when I have entered on my soldier-life.”

“Do not talk of being a soldier, Edward,” said his brother; “you know mamma cannot bear the thought of it.”

“Present circumstances,” said Edward, suppressing a sigh, “do not seem to favour my darling wish. I do not know where the money is to come from to purchase my

commission ; so all I can do is to lie on the bare boards and call my sleeping-room a barrack."

This plan for her relief, so kindly devised by her sons, would, Mrs. Gordon was aware, free her from much embarrassment, could she consent to it; but she could not bring herself to endure the thought of her boys encountering such a change as this would prove, after the comfortable, nay, even luxurious apartment they had so recently occupied. To Edward and Osmond she assigned various reasons for refusing her consent to their plan; but every one of them was met by decided opposition on the part of the boys, and at last they so completely overruled everything she had to say, adding, "That it would be famous fun to sleep up in the loft," that she was obliged, reluctantly, to yield to their wishes.

The moving and placing the furniture in the new dwelling was not accomplished till late in the evening. During the day many of the party had been backwards and forwards between the two houses many times, and were very tired, and all the family were more or less fatigued; and the spirits of the most energetic began to flag. The prospect before them certainly was not very cheering: the room in which they were assembled, like all the others, was strewn with a miscellaneous assemblage of carpets, boxes and baskets, while every table and chair was covered with parcels or luggage of some sort or other; which, viewed by the light of one economical candle, wore a dreary aspect enough. Nothing was in its right place, and everything that was wanted for present comfort seemed missing. The little children were cross for want of food and sleep; and among those a little older, a few complaints were uttered, and comparisons, independent of

present circumstances, were made between their late and present abode. One found fault with the smallness of the rooms; one said the entrance was so narrow there would be no room for the rocking-horse and the hoops; another lamented that there was no large play-room, and all joined in a hearty wish that they could go back to the old house.

Helen and her elder brothers, who were resting themselves as well as they could, perched on the tops of baskets, or on the rolls of carpeting, said nothing; but their pensive looks plainly showed that they, too, felt the great change that had come upon them. Mr. Gordon, overcome with the excitement and bustle of the day, for which he was very little fit, had fallen asleep in his armchair.

Mrs. Gordon, who for some time had been gently moving about, and quietly endeavouring to impart to the room an air of greater comfort, approached the pianoforte, and sitting down to it, said, as she ran her fingers lightly over the keys—

“I think music would sound well in a room of these proportions.” She then, passing through a series of sweet modulations, gradually rising in force, dashed into a brilliant and lively capriccio, which, falling by degrees into a plaintive strain, prepared the ear for the full harmonious chords of the Evening Hymn, with which were blended the rich tones of her melodious voice.

The children gathered round their mother; even the little ones all left the spot on which they were reposing, and joining in chorus, raised their voices in praise and thanksgiving to Him who had still preserved to them so many of his choicest blessings—health, peace of mind, talents, and sufficient “food and raiment.”

Just as the hymn was concluded, Agnes entered with the tea; and Mr. Gordon waking up at the moment, his wife tenderly inquired "how he felt?"

"Oh! well, almost well," he replied; "I have had some most refreshing sleep, and such a delightful dream—a dream of music and of angels."

Mrs. Gordon smiled, and the countenances of the children, restored to their usual happy expression by devotional feelings, and the benignant effect of music, might, as they thronged round their father in their desire to render him some little service, have afforded no bad models to a painter when depicting a band of those celestial beings.

Every one was lively at tea, and chatted away gaily, with no other interruption than a joke or two from Allen, which caused a hearty laugh. All who before had murmured at the change, were now finding out superior advantages in the new dwelling over the old. The prospect from the windows was better; a mill and village church were to be seen, that were not visible at the former house; then there was a pretty portico to the door that led into the garden, which, in summer-time would be covered with roses and creepers; and there was a vine whose branches reached to the upper windows, from which it would be delightful to gather grapes, without the trouble of going out of doors; and another great advantage was, the tool-house being close to the garden, so that there would not be the trouble of going far to fetch rakes and hoes when they were wanted. All talked of what they should do next day, and wished it was morning, so eager were they to get everything comfortable and in order; yet when retiring to rest was proposed, no one seemed inclined to move, so

interested and amused were the children in laying plans, and contriving the means by which to execute them.

Notwithstanding their hilarity, when ten o'clock came, the youthful party were ordered to bed, and with family prayers thus happily closed the first day of the Gordons' residence at Myrtle Cottage.

The wished-for morning arrived, and brought with it a large share of toil and bustle; but it brought also contented minds and willing hands for the labour.

Trevor and some younger boys ran off to the garden; for the plants and shrubs brought the day before (but which there had not been time to plant) required immediate attention.

The three elder boys, with Helen, employed themselves in unpacking, and getting the house in order. They worked well, and before dinner-time the drawing-room wore an orderly, even finished appearance, and they had the satisfaction of seeing their parents seated, in the evening, in a room by no means devoid of comfort.

Mr. Gordon, notwithstanding his resignation and cheerful manners under his change of fortune, was unavoidably affected by it. His straitened income necessarily deprived him of many luxuries which, in his weak state of health, were to him necessities; besides which, he had often to exert himself, when perfect repose, both mental and bodily, would have been most salutary.

Mrs. Gordon's life was one of unceasing care and activity. On her devolved the chief management of all the family and money concerns; and many a time her heart ached at the abridgment of their wonted comforts and enjoyments that she was obliged to cause her husband and children. But the great grief of all, to her, was the

suffering state of Mr. Gordon, and the anxiety which his illness caused her. Compared with this all else was as nothing.

Under such circumstances, how much children have it in their power to lessen or increase the comfort of their parents. Edward and Osmond were of an age to render their conduct of importance to those with whom they lived. Their time was no longer chiefly passed at school, as it used to be, and home was the sole theatre of their actions; and on their behaviour there, greatly depended whether that home should be a peaceful and happy abode, or a place where strife and discord embittered every moment of existence.

Edward and Osmond were tall and stout for their age, and were in the possession of high health and vigour. They were well advanced in the usual studies of young gentlemen, and, for their years, were generally well informed.

How many boys, possessing the same advantages, destroy the happiness of home by perverse tempers, self-will, or disobedience.

Far different was the conduct of the boys of the Gordon family. They were kind and dutiful sons, and, by their aimable conduct, greatly lessened every care and sorrow of their parents.

When trouble and anxiety were weighing heavily on the heart of their mother, how often did the ready assistance, prompt obedience, and cheerful manners of her sons, cheer and support her under the burden that oppressed her.

Their father was to his boys an object of the deepest solicitude. They were most desirous to please him, and

it was their careful study to save him, as much as possible, from every care and annoyance.

Most truly did they lament for him his change of circumstances, and the consequent abridgment of his comfort and enjoyment that it brought with it.

Often did Edward, as the eldest of the family, repeat the wish that it was in his power to do something that would bring an increase of income. In this wish he was warmly seconded by Osmond, and the younger boys caught the sentiment from the elder, and cherished the hope of some day or other being useful to their dear father.

It was not only in their own conduct, but in the example that they set their younger brothers, that these boys largely contributed to make the happiness of home.

An instance of this was afforded in the case of Harry, who, seeing his mother, after a day of unusual fatigue, proceeded to hear the youngest boys their lessons, said to her—

“Mamma, my brothers teach; why cannot I hear these little ones their lessons? I shall be ten years of age in a few days, and that, I am sure, is old enough to be able to instruct them in all they have to learn.”

Harry was a very good-tempered boy, and Mrs. Gordon consigned to him the task of teaching Ernest and Charley their little lessons, by which a small saving of time was afforded her; and with one who had so much to do, even this little was of importance.

It would have been a great help if there had been in the family, in the place of Agnes, a strong, active young woman; for the services rendered by the German nurse were very trifling. Day after day it was hoped that news would come of there being an opportunity for her to return to her native country; but as time passed on with-

out hearing anything from Hans Steinberg, Edward feared his friend had forgotten all about his request. But this proved not to be the case, for about a week after the family had been settled in their new abode, there arrived a letter, stating that a lady going to Strasburg would be happy to defray the travelling expenses of Agnes, in return for her services as nurse to her little girls. Nor was this the only part of Hans' letter that was welcome. Besides being kindly written, and expressing much regret at the unfortunate failure of the bank in which Mr. Gordon's money was deposited, it informed Edward of a German work which his friend proposed forwarding to him in a day or two.

"The work I send you," wrote Hans, "is one my father brought with him from Germany, and which an English bookseller accidentally seeing, expressed a wish to have a translation of, saying, if well done, he would give ten pounds for it. I was with my father at the time, and remembering the wish you expressed in your letter, of having it in your power to lighten the burden of your parents, I thought, though the pay is small, you might like to undertake the translation, and I offered to send the work to a friend of mine immediately. The bookseller wants it done in two months; and as it is by no means a thick or a large volume, I think you will accomplish the task in that time, and I know you are capable of doing it well. The only thing of which I had the least doubt was, that, being a scientific work, you might have some difficulty in rendering the chemical terms aright; but I remembered your neighbour Howard, and he will help you in that matter; therefore, if I do not hear to the contrary, I shall conclude the affair is settled, and despatch the book."

“Hear to the contrary !” “Ten pounds a small sum !” Why, my dear Hans, ten pounds will be a little fortune to me—I can buy papa port wine for the next three months, and I do not know what all besides, with such a sum !” Such were the exclamations of Edward when he ran off delighted to find Osmond, to communicate to him the contents of his friend’s letter.

Howard, to whom Hans Steinberg alluded, was the son of one of the medical men at Stoneleigh. He was also a German scholar, and had been at the same school as Edward and Hans. There had always been a friendship between Howard and Edward, although Howard was considerably the oldest, and at the present time he was studying at home several branches of his father’s profession. Chemistry had always been a favourite study with him, and this the young German remembered at the time—he was desirous of doing Edward a little service by sending him a work to translate.

Edward had his time now most fully employed ; but possessing great mental energy, as well as bodily activity, he never was happier. He had the delightful prospect before him of earning a little money to assist his family, and he was indefatigable in his exertions. Osmond, and those of the other boys who were old enough to enter into Edward’s feelings, fully shared his joy ; and as the time drew near for having the translation finished, so fearful were they that he would not have sufficient time in which to complete it, that in order to give him more opportunity for writing, they performed his share of those little services which every one contributed for the general comfort.

—It was a great advantage to Edward that he had acquired the habit of writing quickly. A fondness for

making poetical extracts, begun at a very early age, gave him this facility; and to this it was greatly owing that his task was accomplished without neglecting his own studies, or ceasing to attend to those of Allen and Trevor. He had, besides, received essential assistance from Howard, who correctly rendered in English the chemical terms employed in the German work.

It was a happy moment for Edward when he had finished and sent off his translation; but soon succeeded a time of most anxious suspense,—the period that intervened before he could know the result of his labour. His father, who had looked over, and in some places corrected the language of the manuscript, told him that booksellers and publishers engaged in a large way of business have many very important works to read over, and that he must not be disheartened at an answer not arriving as soon as he expected.

"But," said Edward, "Mr. A. was in a hurry for it;" and he continued to hope for tidings of his work before it was likely that its examination could be finished. However, much sooner than Mr. Gordon expected, and even before Edward's patience was quite exhausted, a letter was placed in Edward's hands by Frank, who for the last week had run out every morning to meet the postman. The letter was directed by a strange hand, and bore a London postmark; it was of large size, and felt heavy.

"It must certainly be from Mr. A.," said Edward, as with trepidation he tore open the envelope. He took out the contents, and the first thing that met his delighted eye was a post-office order—an order for ten pounds to be paid to Mr. Edward Gordon!

All the family shared Edward's pleasure, and the

sympathy of the elder children, the boisterous joy of the younger, and the grateful praise and approbation of his parents, more than rewarded the happy youth for his exertions.

The moment Edward was at liberty, he hastened off by himself to Stoneleigh to receive his money, and to execute a long-cherished project, namely, that of purchasing two or three dozen of good port wine. Wine of this kind had been prescribed medicinally for Mr. Gordon; but, alas! where was the money to come from with which to procure it?—there was barely sufficient for the common necessities of life in so large a family. Edward was by when the doctor told his father that the best medicine he could have was a glass or two every day of generous wine; and his heart ached as he gazed at the shrunk form and sickly-looking countenance of his father, and knew that it was impossible for him to have what would do so much towards restoring him to health.

Many a time, when weary from early rising, to attend to his own and his brothers' studies, or by sitting up late at night to write, he received fresh stimulus from the thought, that if he could succeed in obtaining the ten pounds, he should be able to procure his beloved father the wine that was so greatly to benefit him. Edward had never communicated that such was his intention to any one, not even to Osmond, for fear, by some chance, his father should hear of it, and forbid his disposing, in this way, of so large a portion of his money.

Mr. Gordon's nature was the very reverse of selfish. and it would have been very painful to him to be supplied, under present circumstances, with an expensive luxury; and had he known of his son's generous inten-

tions towards himself, he would have forbidden them, and insisted on having the money either saved against an emergency, or expended in something useful for Edward or his brothers.

Edward was determined to do as he liked in this instance; and he said afterwards, that as he had earned the money, he was resolved to spend part of it as he pleased.

Mr. Gordon would not wound the feelings of his kind son by not appearing pleased with his present, and above all, with the most feeling motive that had prompted him to make it; at the same time he thought it his duty to tell Edward, that under present circumstances, he looked upon money so expended as waste.

"It cannot be waste, dear papa," replied Edward, "if it does you good."

Perhaps Edward was right; for Mr. Gordon's life was of great importance to his family; and the wine certainly strengthened him, and assisted in restoring him to a better state of health.

CHAPTER XV.

We lived in peace and comfort, and were blest
With daily bread, by constant toil supplied.

WORDSWORTH.

Content,
Retirement, rural quiet, friendship, books,
Ease and alternate labour, useful life—
* * * * *

And thus their moments fly.

THOMSON.

Blest be the art that can immortalise—
The art that baffles Time's tyrannic claim
To quench it.

COWPER.

EDWARD being now again comparatively at leisure, turned his thoughts to the improvement of his own and his brother's dormitory, in the "Barrack," as they called the loft.

One end of the loft had been used as a sort of lumber-room, and a variety of miscellaneous articles were piled together and covered with an old rick-cloth. On examination, a considerable quantity of furniture was discovered—chairs with broken legs or worn-out seats, a dilapidated chest of drawers, and one or two shabby tables. There were also old curtains, and a small bedstead, in which dry rot had made havoc.

These articles had been the property of the late tenant—the old gentleman who had suffered the villa and garden to fall into its neglected state. With characteristic indolence, he had caused the furniture, when broken, to be put out of sight, instead of having it repaired; and when he went away, would not take the trouble of having it moved. Mr. Gordon wrote to his late tenant on the subject, and was told, in reply, that the old furniture might be left where it was, or given away, as it was of no value.

"If I do not mistake," said Edward, "we shall find some of these things very useful. Papa gives them to me."

"They are treasures," said Osmond. "We want two or three chairs extremely, and a coat of paint will make some of these very respectable, after we have mended their legs. Our sleeping-room is very bare of furniture. Here is an old washhand-stand, that we might make steady enough to set our basin and jug in. What are you thinking of, Edward?"

"I was thinking," replied Edward, "that out of some of those curtains we might get enough material to make a hanging, which would screen off our two camp bedsteads; and then, with a little contrivance, we might have both a bedroom and a sitting-room."

"Capital!" exclaimed his brother. "There are, fortunately, two windows; so we can have one to each apartment."

The boys were much pleased with this idea; for although the presence of their parents was never felt by them as a restraint, yet some occupations which involved noise, might, they were aware, be much better carried on where there was no danger of disturbing Mr. and Mrs. Gordon; such as carpentering-work, or reciting aloud pieces of poetry, which they were anxious not to forget, or passages from Latin and Greek authors, learned at school by way of exercise. Also a convenient depository was much wanted for the boys' own possessions—their books and other treasures—which had been kept in Edward's study at the large house.

He and his brother immediately set to work; and having selected two curtains in tolerable repair, and cut off a

portion of one that was ragged, Osmond sewed both together with a large needle and strong thread, procured from his sister, and then running a stout cord into the hem at the top, fastened each end of the cord to a projecting rafter in the roof of the loft, by means of a knot and a large nail. Thus a complete partition was formed, dividing the loft into two compartments.

The sleeping-room was at the end furthest from the entrance, which was a trap-door in the floor, reached by a ladder.

The stable had previously been thoroughly cleaned by Joe.

"Suppose," said Edward, "we were to inclose our sitting-room with another curtain hanging. It would still be quite large enough, and then we could shut out the ugly trap-door, and be much more snug."

"And have an entrance-hall," said Osmond. "It will be an improvement. I will get another curtain ready."

"And I in the mean time will mend the table. Allen and I have almost finished two chairs."

There was a convenient rafter, along which the second curtain was nailed; and then the table and chairs, as well as the books and writing-desks, from the house, were brought into the sitting-room, over the floor of which Edward had previously spread some pieces of carpeting, selected from the "stores," as he termed the pile of furniture.

"Does it not look nice?" said Osmond to Helen and Trevor, who came up to see what was going on.

"Yes," said Helen; "but I think it would look better if you could hide all that space between the top of your curtain hangings and the roof of the loft. Could you not

gather up a long strip of another curtain of the right depth, and attach it to a round centre like the top of a tent? That would fit into the penthouse of the roof, and make your sitting-room neat and pretty. I am not very busy this afternoon, and can spare an hour to help in cutting out, if you like."

The brothers accepted this offer with gratitude; and by Helen's direction a thin round piece of wood, that had once been the top of a stool, was bored through in two places, and a rope put through each; one end being knotted to prevent it from slipping out. Helen then covered the wood, at the side on which the knots were, with a piece of the same material as the hangings, and secured it in its place with stout string and a packing needle. She sewed the hanging to this circular centre, with Osmond's assistance; and then with some difficulty he and Edward, the latter raised on a stool set upon the table, managed to put the ropes over two of the highest rafters, and the ends were then held by Helen and Trevor, until Edward could lash them fast to some lower cross-beams.

"How much prettier it looks now," exclaimed all the children.

"I do not see," said Edward, "why I should not hang my prints against the walls; and I mean to-morrow to fix up the book-shelves that I made, and to put up a couple of brackets for the busts of Homer and Shakspeare."

He did as he proposed, and the effect was so good, that when Helen next came to take a look, she suggested altering the name of the place from the Barrack to the Gallery.

"Do," said Osmond. "Let us call it the Gallery in future; especially as I believe the other name suggests disagreeable thoughts to dear mamma."

"I make no objection to the change," said Edward.

"And now," said Helen, "you must come and see what Trevor and I have been doing, though Trevor did most of the work, as I had many in-door matters to attend to. Oh, here are Harry and Fanny come to see us."

Whilst the younger children were looking about in delight and admiration, a fall and cry was heard.

Osmond quickly descended, and found that Willie, following his brother and sister, had slipped off the ladder, and hurt his knee. The wound was painful, but not serious, and the little boy was soon soothed and quieted; but Helen and her elder brothers agreed that it would not do to risk a second accident from the same cause; and charged the little ones never to go up again without some one to take care of them. The opening of the trap-door, too, was very dangerous for children, and it was a great pleasure to them to be in the Gallery. But it was impossible to be always watching them; and, after some cogitation, Edward thought it would be possible to put a rough hand-rail or banister to the sides of the ladder, and continue it round the square opening.

He was sadly at a loss for wood for this purpose. The remainder of the money brought by the German translation was spent in useful articles for the benefit of the family generally; and even if such had not been the case, Edward would not for a moment have thought of devoting the smallest portion of it to his present object.

"The Gallery," as he observed to Osmond and Helen, "should, he was determined, owe all its convenience and improvements to his own and his brother's ingenuity in making things serviceable which were previously useless."

Willie's accident had caused every one for the time

to forget that there was some work of Helen's and Trevor's, completed that day, to look at; but Frank soon reminded his brothers and sisters of this; and the attention of the young party was drawn to a strip of garden-ground close to the wall of the building, which had formerly been cultivated, but latterly was choked up with stones, and contained no vegetation but a few stunted nettles. Trevor had with great diligence removed both stones and weeds, and brought many barrowfuls of fresh mould from the kitchen-garden. He and Helen then transplanted honey-suckles, scarlet-runners, and clematis, which they trained carefully against the wall. The plants had been well watered, and shaded from the sun with matting during the heat of the day, and they all looked well and thriving, and promised, in the course of the summer, to climb up and cover the wall.

The industry and kind thought of the young gardeners was highly commended by the masters of the Gallery; and on Edward's inquiring where Trevor got such nice plants, his brother answered that Mr. Grove, the market-gardener, who lived a short distance off, had given him the plants in exchange for some flower-seeds, which Trevor had taken great pains to collect last summer, and which his father had permitted him to do what he pleased with.

"I have still plenty left," he added, "to stock all the flower-garden, and I have sowed mignonnette and snapdragons all along here in front of the creepers. Mr. Grove says, besides, that I have not had near the value of my seeds yet, and he will give me some choice dahlia roots and rosetrees, and several new plants that he has only just got himself."

"Do you not think, Edward," said Osmond, "that it would please Frank, and accommodate mamma, if we were to mend that bedstead we found among the 'stores;' and find room for it in our sleeping apartment?"

"Yes, I think so," replied Edward. "But I fear the bedstead is too large, and there is the same difficulty that stops us in making our balustrade, namely, no wood."

"What is the difficulty?" said Allen, running up, and catching the word. "As usual, I suppose, you are puzzled about something or other, and want me to help you out!"

The elder boys smiled, and told him the points in question. Allen gravely listened, then looked at the ladder, and examined the bedstead.

"Make the bedstead a foot or two smaller both in length and breadth," he said; "saw off part of the three legs to correspond with the short one that makes it stand uneven; and ask papa to allow you to cut down one of the ash-trees near the pond. They grow far too thick there. Now, have I not solved your difficulties, gentlemen?"

"Indeed you have," his brothers answered, laughing.

Mr. Gordon's permission was easily obtained with regard to the ash-tree; but cutting it down was a more troublesome business than the boys had anticipated. They worked away with saws and hatchets, and apparently made but little impression. Industry and perseverance, however, will do wonders, and after two hard days' work of chopping and sawing, Edward thought the tree would yield to a vigorous pulling of the rope, which had been fastened securely by Allen round the upper part of the stem, before the boys commenced cutting at its root.

Nor was he mistaken, for, after half an hour's exertion

on the part of the elder boys, assisted by Joe, who very opportunely arrived with a message to Mr. Gordon, the small portion still unsawn gave way, and the tree fell with a crash, to the great gratification of the workmen.

More than a week's labour was expended before the wood was sawn into posts and railings, and then Edward found some difficulty in nailing these to the ladder, and fixing them round the trap-door entrance. He had a mechanical turn, however, and had often watched carpenters at work ; so that, with the help of Osmond, Allen, and Trevor, a strong and workmanlike hand-rail was put up, and the younger children, who had watched the proceedings with great curiosity and interest, were told that in future they might go up to the Gallery as often as they liked.

The bedstead was also managed. Having reduced it to a suitable size, the cross-bars were made of young ash-wood, the little boy's mattress placed upon it, and Frank, who had never been told that this arrangement was made for him, exclaimed with delight on finding that he was to be promoted to the honour of sleeping in the Gallery.

On the day that all this business was completed, Edward and Osmond, as agreed beforehand, invited all their brothers and sisters to take tea with them in their favourite retreat, and Helen assisted in carrying out the children's mugs and plates, with an abundant supply of fresh butter, home-made bread, and new milk, a present kindly sent by Mrs. Maydew for the occasion ; and also a plain cake Mrs. Gordon had caused to be made for them.

Trevor added some delicious radishes and young onions, and the feast, as it was called, was thoroughly enjoyed by all the juvenile party, whose merry voices and shouts of laughter were heard with smiles of pleasure by their

parents, while walking together in the now well-ordered garden; and Mr. and Mrs. Gordon congratulated themselves, and each other, as they had many times done before, on the happiness of possessing such good, kind-hearted, and useful children, who brought content and happiness to an humble home, such as all the wealth of the world could not bestow.

When the Gallery was completed, Helen was often invited to take her work there, and listen to some amusing book of travels, biography, or history, which her brothers were reading, and which they were pleased she should hear, saying, "That while she was so kindly sewing for them, or for some other member of the family, it was right that they should do something to beguile the weariness of her occupation."

It is too common to see men and boys engrossed in the selfish indulgence of reading to themselves books which are highly interesting, while a sister or a wife sits by labouring with her needle for the supply of indispensable wants to the family, without any share in the enjoyment of her companion. Some say they cannot read aloud—it hurts their chest, or it tires them—they never could do so in their lives.

Let these tender gentlemen, who will shout for hours in some masculine amusement, *try* if they cannot acquire the power. Give them some strong inducement to persevere in the practice, and they may rest assured they will find it is neither painful nor difficult.

In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred (perhaps the proportion is far larger), where a man will not read aloud, it is from selfishness, not inability, that he refuses to do so.

The English language, both as to its grammar and in other respects, is too much neglected in our public schools, and Mr. Gordon, when his boys were at home for the holidays, sought to remedy this defect; and, among other plans which he followed, he made them read aloud, and taught them to read well.

"Well, Osmond," said Helen, one day, when her brother, who was reading to her a very interesting biographical work, stopped short, and fixed his eyes upon her—"well, why do you not go on?"

"Because," replied Osmond, "this letter from our hero to his mother on her birthday puts me in mind of the birthday of our mother, which will be next month."

"And I dare say," said Edward, who was sitting by, "that you were thinking of the little presents we have always been in the habit of making her, and that this year we have no money to purchase any."

"I was certainly thinking of presents," replied his brother; "but I was thinking, also, that I would make my present for mamma this year myself."

"Make it yourself!" exclaimed Helen; "why, what could you make?"

"Something very delightful," answered Osmond; "at least, had I the powers to execute my ideas, it would be so. I would make a likeness of your sweet-tempered countenance, my dear sister."

Helen laughed, and said she would sit as still as she could, if he liked to try; and added, that she saw no reason why he should not succeed, as he could draw other things very well.

"I think," said Edward, "if you do make a good likeness of Helen, it will be a most acceptable present to

mamma; for you remember how sorry she was that Helen was away when the London artist came to Stoneleigh, and you, and Allen, and I had our portraits taken."

"Yes, I do," said Osmond; "and often and often have I wished, as I looked at them, that I could draw as well."

"You try hard to improve, I am sure," said Helen, "and take every opportunity of drawing that you can."

"The master at your school said you were his best pupil," observed Edward.

"Indeed!" exclaimed Osmond; "I am glad to hear that, for I have serious thoughts of adopting the profession of an artist. No capital is required on starting; and if I do but copy nature closely, perhaps I may get on."

It was no flattery in Helen to say her brother drew well; for certainly, for a lad of his age, he was very clever, both in drawing and colouring. He had shown a decided taste for this charming art from a very little child, which taste his mother had cultivated, thinking that hereafter it might afford her son an agreeable relaxation from the cares incident to more serious employments.

Helen and her brothers were still busily discussing the affair of the portrait, when Allen came in to fetch a book, and on his remarking how interested they seemed with what they were talking about, he was told of Osmond's proposed present for his mamma on her birthday. Allen highly approved of the idea, and said that he would make one of his very best frames to set the portrait in, and that that would be the best gift he could offer his mamma; adding, "How surprised she will be!"

And it was agreed that it should be kept an entire

secret, and no one was to know of what was going forward but the four persons then present. It was doubly agreeable, Osmond thought, that it should be so, for if he failed, his ill-success would not be published, and if he succeeded, the surprise he should occasion would enhance his pleasure. Before separating, Osmond and Helen fixed on the most convenient time for the sittings, and by a little good management they contrived generally to meet in the Gallery at the appointed hour.

The little mystery that these meetings caused, excited a good deal of curiosity among some of those not included in the secret.

"I cannot think, mamma," said Frank, who was always ambitious of being included in any scheme that was going on with his elder brothers—"I cannot think what they are about in the Gallery. There is such running there, and bolting the door, with Helen and Osmond, and not letting any one go up, except Edward and Allen. Even Trevor was kept away till to-day, and when he came down, and I asked him what was going on, he was as secret as everybody else, and only told me not to be too curious. Helen says I shall know in time: I wish I knew now; I do not like waiting."

"You must learn, my dear," replied Mrs. Gordon, "to have patience,—it is a most useful virtue; and do not seek to know what others are not willing to tell you. Curiosity, too much indulged, often produces disagreeable consequences."

Frank endeavoured to profit by his mamma's advice, by restraining his impatience. His forbearance, however, was not much taxed, for the next day being Mrs. Gordon's birthday, he, as well as all the family, learned the cause of the secret meetings in the Gallery.

The portrait had proceeded much to the satisfaction of Edward and Allen; but as they had watched the whole progress from beginning to end, it was thought desirable to submit it to the criticism of a fresh eye; and Trevor was asked to come and give his opinion. Till he entered the gallery he was not aware for what purpose he had been invited at the mysterious hour. No one spoke to him when he came in, and as he was about to inquire why he was sent for, his eyes fell upon the portrait, and he exclaimed—

“Who has been making this capital likeness of Helen?”

Nothing could have more gratified the youthful artist than this sudden exclamation; and it confirmed Edward and Allen in their favourable opinion of the drawing.

The frame, too, came in for a share of Trevor's approbation, and he thought it a very well-chosen present. All the children who were old enough had some little present of their own making to offer to their dear mamma; and when they met her in the morning, after saluting her with their best wishes for her health and happiness, they produced their gifts.

Much time and pains had been bestowed in preparing these little tokens of regard, which were highly prized by the fond mother, for the feelings of affection which had prompted her children to make these efforts to please her. Gold and diamonds were of little worth in Mrs. Gordon's eyes, compared with the simple gift laid before her by each little hand.

The youngest children's presents were brought forward first, and then Edward showed his, which consisted of a manuscript music-book, filled with his mother's favourite hymns and chants, neatly copied from a book lent him by an organist of Stoneleigh. Trevor's little offering was a

a map of Mrs. Gordon's native county, correctly drawn and prettily coloured. Helen's, a piece of needle-work. But the great event of the day, and it was acknowledged by all to be such, was the exhibition of Osmond's portrait of his sister.

The first feeling of Mrs. Gordon, on seeing it, was surprise: she could not imagine where or how Osmond had been able to obtain such a prize for her. She declared the likeness to be admirable; and though she owned the execution was not that of an experienced artist, yet the portrait possessed that first of merits, the characteristic expression of the original. She repeated her desire to know how the picture had been obtained; while all the young party in the secret stood round enjoying her wonder, till at last Osmond said—

“It is my doing, mamma.”

“Your doing!” repeated Mrs. Gordon; “surely you are joking.”

“Indeed, mamma, I am not,” replied Osmond, highly gratified at the successful result of his attempt to please his dear mother.

“Then, if it really is your doing,” said Mrs. Gordon, “I must own that I am very much surprised and delighted at the progress you have made, not only in the art, but in one of the hardest branches of it. This portrait does you very great credit, and you have presented me with a gift that I value most highly. Thank you, my dear boy, and thank you all, my dear children,” continued she, again examining each little gift, “for all these tokens of your love and thought of me. Surely this is one of the happiest days of my life!”

“Last year,” said Mr. Gordon, who, too, had presented



OSMOYD SHOWING THE PORTRAIT.

some out of curiosity to see the place, and others, among which were Mrs. Freeman and Miss Marvell, to ascertain how such an important personage bore her downfall. The latter set went away completely disappointed, for they had expected, nay, even hoped, to hear murmurings and expressions of discontent; instead of which they found Mrs. Gordon the same contented, cheerful person she had ever been.

Some few invitations to parties, both for Mr. and Mrs. Gordon, and also for their children, had arrived, but these had all hitherto been declined; and it was not till the midsummer holidays that any of the family quitted the seclusion of home. A note then arrived, containing an invitation for the elder children to a juvenile party at the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Milwood, who resided a short distance from Stoneleigh. The young Gordons were very desirous of going; and their parents consented that they should do so, as they wished their children now to have a little relaxation from the studies and pursuits in which they had been of late so closely engaged.

The party was given to celebrate the birthday of Henry Milwood, who was an only son, and who, on that day, attained the age of twelve years. He was a quiet boy, not very bright, or very clever, but well behaved, when he was not drawn into rude and disagreeable conduct by others. The Gordons were requested to go early; and, after the children's dinner, the four elder boys, accompanied by Helen—for there was a Miss Milwood, and young ladies were invited—set out. It was a delightful summer's day, and the young party enjoyed their walk; and to prolong it, for they feared they were a little too soon, they turned down a lane, and crossed over some meadows that brought them to the back entrance to Mr.

Milwood's premises. Just as they were passing through the garden gate, they heard the cries of a child in distress, and then a great deal of shouting and laughter. They ran forward, and saw standing round a pond a party of boys, among whom were Hugh and Peter Wyld, and their young host; and on drawing nearer, they discovered the cause of the uproar.

An unfortunate cat had made its appearance among the boys, and Hugh Wyld, pretending it was mad, caught it up and threw it into the pond, and, instigated by him, the rest of the party stood round, shouting, hallooing, and preventing the poor animal from making its escape at any point which it tried to reach, while Emma Milwood, a tender-hearted little girl, looked on, crying, and begging the boys not to be so cruel; but no one heeded her, so intent were they on their brutal sport.

"Shame, shame!" cried Edward and Osmond, rushing up to the spot.

"How can you," said Edward, indignantly addressing Hugh Wyld—"how can you, as the eldest of the party, set such a bad example?" Then laying hold of young Milwood's arm, and pulling him back, he said, "Is it possible that you can take pleasure in being so cruel?"

"Stand away, stand away!" cried Osmond; "the poor animal has just strength left to crawl out, if you will but get out of the way;" and the cat seeing a vacant place where Edward had drawn off Henry Milwood, crept up the side of the pond, where she was carefully taken up by her young mistress, and with Helen's assistance, deposited in a comfortable basket of hay.

Two or three of the grown-up members of the com-

pany, among whom was Henry's father, had been attracted towards the spot by the noise, and inquired of the two girls, as they passed, what was the matter.

Mr. Milwood was very angry with his son, on learning that he had taken part in such a cruel transaction.

"It is well for you, Henry," said he, "that this is your birth-day, or you should have cause to remember what you have done for some time to come."

"The cat was mad," said Henry, whimpering.

"Mad!" repeated his father; "get along with you, you simpleton, and learn to know better." And not very well pleased with this exhibition of his son's cruelty or folly, Mr. Milwood moved away.

"How very severe," said Miss Marvell to an old gentleman with whom she was walking, "Mr. Milwood was with his son!"

"I do not think so," replied her companion; "if he had been my boy, I know he should not have been let off so easily."

"La! you surprise me," said Miss Marvell, simperingly; "why, boys will be boys."

"I never understood the meaning of that saying," said the old gentleman, drily.

"How very odd!" said Miss Marvell.

"Does it mean," said the gentleman, without noticing the lady's astonishment, "that boys are boys, as men are men; or does it mean that boys are to continue the rough beings they often are, and to be left to do as they please, and act according to every wild vagary that may seize them, without reproof, correction, or restraint, or any attempt being made to control or amend their follies? If so, boys who might be the blessing, must be the torment

of their families. Am I right or wrong?" continued he, addressing a friend who had come up and joined the other two in their walk. "This lady will not agree with me, for she justifies the conduct of the boys towards the poor cat, upon the plea that 'boys will be boys.'"

"Indeed!" exclaimed the new comer, "I am surprised at that, for I thought ladies never advocated cruelty; and I think she will find, that the boys who perpetrate such acts of wanton cruelty, are exactly those who, when grown to be men, break women's hearts."

"Oh! I do not like cruelty, I am sure," said Miss Marvell, with a gentle shudder; but possessing something of a spirit of contradiction, and not altogether liking the manner in which her opinions had been opposed, she sought to maintain her right of judgment by another of her hackneyed phrases, and exclaimed—

"Anything is better than tame boys."

"I am again unfortunate," said the lady's sturdy opponent; "I do not thoroughly comprehend the meaning of that expression, any more than I did your other, of 'boys will be boys.'"

Miss Marvell's countenance wore a slight expression of contempt, but the gentleman went on, and said—

"By tame boys, do you mean those who, in the company of their elders, can behave themselves with propriety, and restrain their wild mirth and gaiety till a proper opportunity for giving loose to it occurs? If so, give me the company of 'tame boys;' for those who cannot conduct themselves like young *gentlemen* in society, ought to be excluded from it."

Miss Marvell made no reply; and leaving the "stupid old gentleman" to think as he pleased, she tripped away

to find better amusement, and, in the course of the day, she had ample opportunity of increasing her stock of knowledge respecting the conduct of boys.

By the time Miss Marvell rejoined the rest of the company, she found the juvenile part of it much increased, and the boys were dispersing in various directions, to follow the amusements best suited to their taste. Some went off to cricket—and among this number were the two elder Gordons; some went angling in a stream at the bottom of the garden; and some amused themselves with bows and arrows, or games at ball.

The Wylds were for having a ride on a pony that was grazing in a meadow beside the plantation, and looked about for Henry Milwood, to bid him desire the servant to saddle and bridle it. Henry was sitting by himself, looking rather sullen, on a retired seat on the lawn.

"Why, what's the matter?" cried Hugh; "you are not brooding over what your gov'nor said still, are you? Come, do not be a spooney; get up and enjoy yourself. Never mind the old fellow. We want a ride on the pony, and you must tell John to get him ready. You shall ride too; it will put a little life into you."

Thus called upon, Henry, though still looking dull, rose and went in search of the servant; and the pony being duly prepared, Henry with the two Wylds, Allen, and Trevor, and two or three other boys, proceeded to the meadow, all desirous of taking their turn in a ride. But Hugh had no intention of any one but himself enjoying the use of the pony, and immediately mounting, he galloped as hard as he could several times round the meadow, using a stick he had in his hand very freely. Henry called to him not to ride his pony so hard; but on

he went, either not hearing or not regarding the cry, till the stirrup breaking, he was obliged to dismount close to the spot where the boys were standing, and Henry, laying hold of the bridle of the panting pony, said Hugh should not ride any more, and that he would mount him himself.

"Nonsense!" said Hugh, "you do not want to ride; you can do so any day."

"I will ride now," said Henry, whose temper, previously ruffled, was by no means composed by this behaviour of Hugh's. "You told me yourself I should;" and seeing Hugh about to reseal himself in the saddle, he added, "if you do not let me, I will go and tell papa to desire John to come and fetch the pony in."

"Well, get on then, if you will," said Hugh; and Henry mounting, nodded to Trevor, saying, "You shall ride next."

But Hugh had not the slightest intention of resigning his amusement to any one, and taking out a breastpin, he applied it unseen to the animal's haunches, who kicked out violently, continuing to do so on a repetition of the pricks.

Henry, who was a timid boy, called out with fright, and begged Hugh to catch hold of the pony.

Hugh did so, and the annoyance having ceased, Henry was able to dismount.

"He is too frisky for you," said Hugh; "he wants the spirit a little more taken out of him," and throwing himself into the saddle, he again galloped off as fast as he could.

The other boys watched him as he went flogging the pony down the meadow, till leaping over a hedge at the

bottom, he disappeared along the high-road. He had not been gone long, when he again came in sight, advancing towards them at a far more leisurely pace, and stopping short a little distance from the party, he dismounted, and called to Trevor to "take his turn."

Trevor, well pleased, hastened to the spot, and sprang on to the pony, and Hugh was just levelling a blow to urge the animal forward, when Allen, who had followed close upon his brother, caught hold of the bridle, and held the pony in.

Allen bid his brother get off directly, and turning round, he said—

"Hugh, you have broken the pony's knees;" but Hugh heard him not, for he was running at the top of his speed towards the plantation, on nearing which he slackened his pace, adjusted his dress, smoothed the hair on his forehead, and passing through to the other side, he assumed a calm and collected look, and joined himself to a party of ladies and gentlemen.

In the mean time, the boys in the meadow had gathered round the pony, lamenting the accident, while his young master was crying with vexation.

"How cowardly and how cruel!" exclaimed Allen; "Hugh, in urging the poor animal along beyond his strength, must have thrown him down on the hard road, and then set my brother off to ride on him, that it might be supposed that he, being the last rider, had caused the injury. I caught sight of blood on the pony's knees, and guessing what Hugh was after, I ran up to stop Trevor's riding."

It was not till some time after the accident to the pony that Mr. Milwood heard of it, and he was then unable to

gain a true account of how it had happened, or who was the cause of it.

Hugh was of course declared by the party who had been with him in the meadow, to be the perpetrator of the mischief; but he stoutly repelled the accusation, demanding, with a fierce air, who had seen him throw the pony down, and that they all knew that Trevor Gordon was the last who rode him. "Besides," said he, appealing to some ladies of the company, "you know I was walking and talking with you when Henry Milwood brought his pony out of the meadow."

Allen indignantly denied that his brother was the author of the mischief, and Trevor asked Hugh how he dared say he was. But these two boys were no match in a war of words with a person like Hugh, for he talked them down in the most overbearing manner, and when at last, in a lull of tongues, for many were talking, Allen made himself heard, Hugh, with the greatest effrontery, desired him not to be so clamorous, for truth did not need it; truth was always quiet.

When the game was over, the cricketers were glad to enjoy a little repose, and to partake of the refreshment of tea, which was served in the drawing-room. While waiting for his turn to be attended to, Edward amused himself by looking at a splendid copy of Claude's "*Liber Veritatis*," the prints being, many of them, among the first of the impressions taken from the copper-plate. He was, however, soon called away by a gentleman opposite, who wished to make some inquiries respecting the health of Mr. Gordon, who was an old friend of his. Hugh Wyld, who had been looking about for a seat, hastened to the vacant chair, and took possession of it, just as his brother was about to

do the same. A servant passing at the moment, Peter seized upon a single cup of coffee that remained on the tray, and was going to drink it, when Hugh snatched it from his hand, declaring that his brother had already had two cups, while he had had none. Peter attempted to regain his coffee, but Hugh jerking it away, the cup was overturned, and a great part of the contents spilled on Claude's beautiful prints. In a moment Hugh closed the book, and hastened to another part of the room, wholly indifferent to the fate of the engravings, and only anxious to escape detection.

After tea there was music, and when two or three other ladies had performed, Miss Marvell was requested to sing one of her Scotch songs.

During the music, which they voted to be a great bore, the Wylde and one or two of their cronies kept up a whispering conversation, accompanied by a low tittering laugh; but when Miss Marvell, with a very indifferent voice and considerable affectation, began her favourite air of "My heart's in the Hielands," Peter Wyld said, in a whisper loud enough to be heard by several of the company, "I wish you were where your heart is;" a witticism, which so tickled the fancy of his companions, that, bursting into a roar of laughter, they got up, and rushed out of the glass doors on to the lawn.

Here these young gentlemen quieted the ebullition of their feelings, by jumping over such of the flower-beds as were out of sight of the drawing-room windows; in performing which feats, they trampled considerably on the plants; and Hugh, stumbling in one of his leaps, snapped off, at its roots, a beautiful lily, which Mr. Milwood had exhibited, with much satisfaction, to his company in the

morning. There was a momentary pause in the gambols; but Hugh, quickly catching up the prostrate flower, made a hole in the ground, and stuck it in, to the great admiration of his companions, saying, at the same time,

"This will keep up for the present, at any rate, and not tell any tales of us, till we are gone."

By this time most of the juvenile party were out again, and Peter Wyld attaching himself to a few of the youngest, engaged them in conversation, with a view of ascertaining if they had any money about them; and discovering that some of the children had either a sixpence or some small silver coin in their pockets, he went in search of a pack of cards, which having obtained, he invited the little boys to accompany him to an alcove in the garden, saying, that if they would come with him, he would show them something very amusing. The children followed, and after having entertained them a little while with some conjuring tricks, he proposed tossing for money.

"You will be sure to win, for I am always unlucky," said he, on perceiving that some of the children seemed willing to risk their money.

"Look," continued he, "I throw this shilling of mine up, and do you call out what it shall be—shall it be heads or tails?"

"Heads," said one of the party, who knew he was not risking his own money.

"Heads, you say;" and Peter tossing up the shilling, it came down heads; "there, you see you would have won if you had been really playing. Now, try again. Tails, you say, this time, and there it is tails."

Peter then invited first one and then another of the children to try their luck, and in every instance they

guessed right. They all thought it very singular that they should be so lucky, and Peter so unlucky, and it now required little persuasion to make them produce and play for their own money.

Peter began by letting the children win; then there was a fluctuation in their luck, and they sometimes lost; but he continued to keep up the excitement by making the losers try to recover their money, till he had gone on and won every sixpence from the little boys.

Just as the game was concluded, one of the elder boys of the company strolled into the alcove, and learning by the children's exclamations that they had all lost their money, he said to Peter,

"You have been cheating them out of it, I suppose."

"Cheating!" repeated Peter, affecting much indignation at such a charge being brought against him. "Cheating! why you don't think me capable of that, I should hope. No; I have had a run of good luck, and I am not to be blamed, I suppose, if when I toss up, and 'heads' are cried, the money comes down tails. It was as fair as could be; was it not?" continued he, appealing to the discomfited children. "Nothing could be fairer!" Then turning to the elder boy, he said, "I will toss with you, if you like."

"No, I thank you," replied the other coolly; "I am no gambler: I have no fancy for losing my own money, and I do not wish to win that of others;" and shrugging his shoulders, he walked away, leaving Peter not quite so well satisfied with his success as he had been a few minutes before. He saw his unfair play was suspected, and a momentary sense of shame crossed his mind, and he even debated within himself whether he should not return the

children their money. But Peter's reflections were speedily put to flight by the entrance of Hugh into the alcove, who, drawing his brother aside, said, in a low voice—

"I thought what you were at; you have been beforehand with me. How much have you got?"

"Oh, nothing; nothing, hardly," replied Peter, with whom the sight of his brother instantly dispelled any better feeling, accustomed as he was to be encouraged by him, both by precept and example, in various kinds of fraud and deceit.

"That is a lie, I know," said Hugh; "and you know so too. Why, I met one of the children, and he said to me, 'Your brother has won such a heap of money from us.'"

"Pooh! nonsense!" said Peter; and he advanced to the door of the alcove, which was now unoccupied, except by himself and his brother, with the intention of passing out.

"Stay!" said Hugh, laying a rough hand on Peter; "you shall give me half the money; it was I who taught you the trick by which to win it, and it is but just that you should do so. And if you will not give it me by fair means, I will take it by force."

Peter made another attempt to escape from his brother; but Hugh was not to be thus put off, and being much the strongest of the two, he seized hold of Peter, and forcibly possessed himself of the purse containing the ill-gotten spoils, saying, as he walked off with it,

"If you had given it up quietly, you should have kept half; but now I will have the whole, and you may take it as a punishment for your lie, and for trying to deceive me."

"And who was it taught me," called Peter after his brother, as he was marching triumphantly away, "to tell lies and be deceitful; was it not yourself?" And disappointed of his prize, annoyed that his unfair dealings were suspected, and dissatisfied with his own conduct, he added, half crying,

"I almost wish I was good!"

No compunctious thoughts disturbed Hugh's enjoyment, and when supper was announced, he pushed himself in among the very first, and taking the seat that best pleased his fancy, he helped himself unsparingly to the good cheer before him. But even greediness has its limits, and when his appetite became thoroughly palled, he grew tired of sitting, and rising, left his place to join a party of boys of his own set, who were supping at a side-table.

"I wish we could have a little fun," said Hugh.

"Anything you please," replied the boy addressed; "I am up to anything; propose something."

"I do not know what to propose," said Hugh, "that is the worst of it. We cannot break the plates or glasses; and if we could, there is not much fun in that."

"No," replied his friend; "but there would, if we could put the lights out."

"We cannot contrive that," said Hugh; "it must be something quiet—stay, I have it. We will punish Miss Marvell for her song; see, she is sitting close by us, and beside the old gentleman she cannot bear, for he always contradicts her."

"What will you do?" inquired one of the party.

"I will pin them together," answered Hugh; "and then I will cause her to start up, and she shall leave a

part of her smart laces on the coat of the old gentleman, as a trophy of her defeat in argument with him. But I must have some pins; there is Helen Gordon opposite, she is always good-natured; go," continued he, addressing the youngest boy of the party, "and ask her for some pins; but do not tell her what they are wanted for, or she will not give them."

The boy did as he was desired, and soon returned with two or three stout pins, which Hugh taking, he stooped down close to Miss Marvell and the old gentleman, and, concealed from view by his companions around him, he adroitly managed, without in the least disturbing the parties concerned, to attach a considerable portion of the delicate fabric of which the lady's dress was composed to the tails of her neighbour's coat.

This accomplished, Hugh got up, and reaching over the supper-table, drew a decanter forward, saying, he wanted a glass of wine for a lady; at the same time pretending that some one pushed on him from behind, he turned round, calling out angrily, "Don't push so." He then threw down the decanter, as if accidentally, immediately in front of Miss Marvell, who, to escape the flowing stream, dashed back her chair with force, and started up, leaving, as was expected, long strips of her dress on the coat of her argumentative opponent.

The perpetrator of the mischief and his companions retreated a little distance off to enjoy the fun; and as it was their wish to distress and annoy, their scheme must have fully answered. Besides the vexation of having an expensive dress destroyed, the ridiculous situation in which Miss Marvell found herself placed was very mortifying. There she stood, with her dress rent in many places from

top to bottom, while the gentleman to whom she had been pinned was vehemently tearing off the pieces hanging to his coat, and throwing them on the ground, at the same time darting on her, as the remote cause of his absurd position, many angry glances.

Several of even the best-bred among the company could not refrain from a smile, while peal upon peal of boisterous laughter from the Wylds, and boys of their order, rang most disagreeably in her ears; and her irritation was not a little increased by thinking that Hugh had purposely upset the decanter. If he had not done that, the mischief would not have been so complete.

Mrs. Milwood tried to approach her discomfited guest; but there was such a press of persons round the spot where Miss Marvell stood, that, instead of doing so, she sent Edward Gordon, who was near her, to escort the lady into another room.

Edward tendered his services in an obliging manner, and cleared the way for Miss Marvell to pass, and when he had seated her in a room apart from the company, he went in quest of her shawl, and by her request desired the servant to see if her conveyance was ready, into which he handed her with a gentleness that seemed to imply a degree of sympathy in her great annoyance.

Edward did feel sorry that a lady had been so rudely treated, and thought it a pity that her handsome dress was spoiled, and he remained a few minutes on the step of the door after Miss Marvell had driven off, thinking how strange it was that any one could find pleasure in doing so much mischief.

Edward and his brothers were as lively, and loved fun as much as any boys; but they had been early taught that

practical jokes are seldom pleasant; and never to take pleasure in anything that gives pain to another.

In the mean time, Miss Marvell, as she was rattled home in the Stoneleigh "fly," felt her opinion somewhat shaken as to the inferiority of "tame boys" to "boys who will be boys."

CHAPTER XVII.

Beware
Of entrance to a quarrel; but being in,
Bear't, that th' opposed may beware of thee.

SHAKESPEARE.

THE evening of the day after the party at Mr. Milwood's, as Edward and Osmond were returning from a walk, just as they arrived at a turn in the road, they were startled by Hugh and Peter Wyld, and a friend of theirs, leaping over a hedge close beside them.

"I have been looking about for you all the afternoon," said Hugh, addressing the brothers; "I wanted to tell you that the Gordons are all at discount; quite out of favour at the Grove. I called there this morning, with the gov'nor, and Mr. Milwood is monstrous queer, I can tell you; for besides breaking the pony's knees, and the trick that was played upon Miss Marvell, his Claude prints are all spoiled."

"You never saw such a condition as they are in," said Peter.

"And you never saw such a way as old Milwood is in about them," continued Hugh; "they are all stained, right through the book, with coffee! He only knew of it this morning; he had just made the pleasant discovery as

we got there, and he was in a glorious fuss, saying he was determined to find out who had done it, and——”

“And he asked us,” interrupted Peter, “if we could tell who it was that did it, and——”

“And I said it was you,” cried Hugh, thrusting his brother aside.

“I did it! You told Mr. Milwood that it was I who did it?” exclaimed Edward, perfectly startled at such a glaring falsehood; for Helen had told him that, unseen herself by any one, she had witnessed the scramble between the two Wylds, and the overturn of the coffee on the book. She also said that she should have given notice of the circumstance, if she had not seen a servant carry off the book, for the purpose, as she imagined, of having the damage repaired as well as it could be.

“Ah! it is no use putting on that stare of surprise,” said Hugh, speaking rapidly; “you, and your brother, and sister, are known to have done all the mischief yesterday. Trevor broke the pony’s knees, your sister gave the pins, and put the boys up to pinning the old girl and boy together, and you, with all your sanctimoniousness, threw the coffee over the book of prints.”

For a few moments Edward was in a great passion, and felt as if he could knock the base calumniator down; but the magnitude of Hugh’s charges restored him to reason, and he commanded himself to say—

“You know perfectly well that it was not my brother who injured the pony, and that my sister gave the pins she was asked for, thinking they were to be used as Scott said, to pin up a drawing. As to the book of prints, you know——”

“Yes, I know,” broke in Hugh, “and everybody else

knows, that you were sitting poring over them all tea-time."

"I had left off looking at the book," replied Edward, "before I had either tea or coffee: Mr. Morley called me over to——"

"Come, come," again interrupted Hugh, with whom it was a great object not to be suspected, and who, though feeling tolerably secure that no one had seen him throw the coffee over the book, thought it better, in the presence of a third party, to appear to think the mischief had been done by Edward,—“come, come, it is useless to deny it.”

“I do deny it,” said Edward; “and, what is more, I will tell you who did it; it was——”

“Now do not try to fix the blame on some one else; do not tell a lie to screen yourself,” exclaimed Hugh, eagerly.

“Tell a lie!” said Edward, his eyes flashing with anger; “do you accuse me of uttering a falsehood?”

“Yes, when it suits your purpose,” replied Hugh; “then you tell lies as well as anybody else.”

“Repeat what you have just said,” said Edward, advancing close to Hugh, with a menacing air. “Say again that I am a liar!”

“Oh! you want to fight, do you?” said Hugh, sneeringly.

“Yes; or you shall retract what you have said,” replied Edward, in a resolute manner.

“I shall do neither the one thing nor the other,” said Hugh, stubbornly; and he turned on his heel to depart.

“You do not move from here,” said Edward, laying a strong hand on Hugh’s arm, “till you have retracted your base accusation, or till I have given you such a thrashing as you never had in your life before!”

Hugh, who was half a year older, and taller and stronger than Edward, surveyed him with contempt. It was not from any feeling of fear, but from disliking the exertion, that he did not wish to fight.

"Be off," cried he, attempting to shake off Edward. "Let me go."

"No!" said Edward resolutely, and retaining a firm hold of Hugh.

"Fight it out," said the boy who accompanied the Wylds; "fight it out! Go into the meadow close by; go up to the hedge yonder,—no one will interrupt you there. I will be your second, Hugh, and Gordon's brother may be his."

"Well, I do not care," replied Hugh, "if I do give the chap a good licking; it will take the impertinence out of him."

"Do you call my brother impertinent?" exclaimed Osmond; "it is not *he* who is impertinent!"

"What! you want a thrashing too, do you?" said Hugh; "well, you shall have one when I have settled your brother."

The party entered the meadow, and reaching the appointed spot, Hugh and Edward prepared themselves for the fight.

At first sight it would have appeared that Hugh, from his superior height and bulk, had much the advantage of his opponent; but he possessed neither skill nor judgment, while Edward had picked up at school a very tolerable notion of the art of attack and defence.

Hugh despising his adversary, thought to fell him to the ground with his first blow, and rushed furiously forward, lifting his foot a little from the ground, in order to throw the greater weight into his body.

Edward, stepping on one side, avoided the thrust, and before his adversary had time to recover himself, he planted a heavy blow on his chest, which sent him sprawling all along on the grass. Hugh quickly regained his legs, and flew at Edward, aiming several hard blows at him, all of which Edward skilfully parried, he acting chiefly on the defensive, with a view of exhausting his adversary, and making him lose his self-command, for he saw that Hugh was getting more and more angry, as he found his blows did not tell. Provoked to be so foiled, not only by one whom he hated, but by one who was his inferior in strength, Hugh tried to trip his antagonist up, but Edward's keen and watchful eye thwarted him in all his manœuverings, and at last, taking advantage of one of Hugh's unskilful attempts to throw him, he caught him round the neck, and jerking down his head, held it tight under his arm; "put his head in chancery," as the technical term is.

Any boy possessing the least knowledge of the science of boxing will be aware how great was now Edward's advantage, and they will give him credit for his forbearance, when, instead of dealing a series of blows upon his antagonist, he told him, that if he would fully and completely retract all his calumnies, he would let him off without further punishment.

Hugh struggled hard to release himself, but it was of no use, his head was firmly pinioned to his adversary's side, and seeing he had no other mode of getting free, he made the desired recantation, Edward holding him tight all the time. But no sooner did Hugh feel the loosening of Edward's arm, than seizing his generous foe round the waist, he lifted him up and dashed him violently to the ground. For a few moments Edward was stunned; Osmond flew to

his side and raised his head, when, quickly recovering himself, he started up, determined to avenge himself to the utmost on so dastardly an antagonist, whose conduct was utterly at variance with every principle of honour.

Hugh, triumphing in the success of his cowardly act, advanced boldly to meet Edward, and dealt several blows which were not without effect, for Edward's judgment was for the moment obscured by passion. Soon, however, recovering the coolness which he full well knew was essential to victory, he again brought his knowledge of the science to bear, and just as Hugh was levelling a blow at him which he intended should be decisive, Edward planted a left-handed hit in his adversary's side, which took him entirely by surprise, and nearly drove all the breath out of his body, when, quickly following up his advantage, he aimed a rapid succession of blows at Hugh's head and face, which, cutting open his cheek and closing one of his eyes, speedily decided the fate of the battle. Roaring with pain, Hugh sunk to the ground, and Edward, casting a scornful glance at his contemptible foe, left him to recover as he best could.

Edward was in a state of no little excitement when he reached home, and he hastened to tell his parents of his encounter with Hugh Wyld, and of all that had happened. In a rapid manner he related how Hugh had been watching about to see him, and had told him of his calling that morning at Mr. Milwood's, and of his having informed that gentleman that it was by him that the coffee had been thrown over his Claude prints, and then how Hugh repeated that it was Trevor who broke the pony's knees, and that it was by Helen's instigation that the boys played Miss Marvell that mischievous trick.

"And then," continued Edward, "when I denied having injured the book, he called me a liar. At first he refused to fight with me. He would neither fight nor retract what he said;" and then Edward went on and gave an accurate account of the battle in all its details.

Mr. and Mrs. Gordon listened with deep attention to their son's history, and Edward waited anxiously to hear what they would say. He knew his father and mother were desirous that he should live, as much as possible, in peace with every one, and take care to avoid getting into quarrels; but here was an instance, he thought, in which they could not blame him, although he had caused considerable bodily suffering to another.

"He could not have done otherwise, indeed, papa," said Osmond; "and even mamma would have thought the coward was rightly served."

"Certainly, as you relate the circumstances, my dear boy," said Mr. Gordon,—“and I am sure you have related them correctly, I cannot say that I blame you, at the same time I wish that the matter could have been settled without blows. You will remember that I have approved of the knowledge that you possess of boxing as a mode of defence, not of attack.”

"I was defending myself, papa," replied Edward, "against the attacks of his tongue—the worst attacks he could make on me."

And you adopted the best mode of defence, you think," said Mr. Gordon, smiling, but gently shaking his head.

"It is too bad," exclaimed Edward, "to have such a fellow going about telling falsehoods of us."

"And making Mr. Milwood," said Osmond, "believe that Edward spoiled his book."

"Mr. Milwood does not believe Edward injured his book," said Mr. Gordon.

"He does not!" exclaimed Edward, with pleasure.

"No," said his father; "Mr. Milwood called here this evening, and I believe his principal errand was to tell us of Hugh Wyld's impudent assertion of the morning, and that he did not believe a word of it; neither does he think Trevor threw down the pony, nor that my little gentle Helen promoted the destruction of Miss Marvell's dress."

"You see, my dear," said Mrs. Gordon, addressing Edward, "that a little patience in these matters is often very desirable. Had you waited till this evening, you would have found yourself cleared from any disagreeable charge. Besides which, Mr. Milwood said,—and it is a gratification to me to repeat it,—that he was well assured our children took no pleasure in mischief, and even if they had accidentally been the cause of any, far from striving to conceal it, they would be the first to endeavour to repair any damage they had done."

"That is very kind in Mr. Milwood," said Osmond; "still some other people might believe Hugh's stories against us."

"I think I have silenced his tongue for some time to come," said Edward, unable to repress a feeling of satisfaction at the recollection of the thrashing he had given the false and cowardly youth.

"Perhaps you may," said Mr. Gordon; "but what would be far better, I wish we could change his heart."

"Unhappy youth!" said Mrs. Gordon; "what is to become of him, if he goes on as he does now? Sincerely do I wish that his parents, before it is too late, would set about the work of reformation with him."

"There is no confidence between him and his parents," said Mr. Gordon.

"None whatever," replied Mrs. Gordon; "and where that is the case, both children and parents lose one of the first blessings of life."

CHAPTER XVIII.

When the fresh Spring in all her state is crown'd,
And high luxuriant grass o'erspreads the ground,
The labourer with the bending scythe is seen,
Shaving the surface of the waving green,
Of all her native pride disrobes the land,
And meads lays waste before his sweeping hand;
While with the mounting sun the meadow glows,
The fading herbage round he loosely throws,
But if some sign portend a lasting shower,
Th' experienced swain foresees the coming hour,
His sunburnt hands the scattering fork forsake,
And ruddy damsels ply the saving rake;
In rising hills the fragrant harvest grows,
And spreads along the field in equal rows

GAY.

Ill-will never said well.

SHAKESPEARE.

ATTACHED to Myrtle Cottage was a meadow of fine grass land, which Mr. Gordon was desirous of letting, but which he had hitherto been unsuccessful in finding any one to hire.

"I have been again disappointed about the meadow," said he, coming in one evening into the room where Mrs. Gordon was giving the younger children their supper.

"Indeed!" said Mrs. Gordon; "I thought Mr. Vernon was likely to take it."

"I hoped he would," replied Mr. Gordon; "but, singularly enough, just as I thought I had found a tenant,

my old friend tells me that he is going to leave this part of the country."

"I am sorry he is going!" exclaimed Edward, who, with his elder brothers had entered the room just after their father.

"I should regret it too," said Mr. Gordon, "if it was not for his advantage; but a distant relation is just dead, and our friend comes in for a very fine property in Kent."

"He was not badly off before," observed Mrs. Gordon.

"No," replied her husband; "but now he is a rich man. He intends selling off everything here, even his fine Alderney cows, of which, by the bye, he offered to give me one,—his favourite, I think; he wants to insure her being well taken care of; but——"

"What, Beauty, papa!" eagerly interrupted Helen; "will he give you Beauty?"

"He would do so," replied Mr. Gordon, "if I would accept her."

"Oh, papa, surely you will not refuse her," exclaimed Osmond; "what a treasure she would be!"

"What nice fresh butter we should have," said Trevor.

"And such nice milk!" "So different from this!" "Like what we used to have at the other house," cried several little voices from the supper-table; "Do, do, let us have the cow, papa!"

"I have no means of keeping a cow, my dears," replied their father.

"It would be an excellent thing," said Mrs. Gordon, addressing her husband, "if it could be contrived. Good new milk is quite a necessary for you; but in this, as in everything else, we must bend to circumstances. We cannot keep a cow, I know."

"Why not, dear mamma?" exclaimed Osmond.

"Why not, my dear! Do you ask, why not?" said his mother, smiling; "is there not the one great thing wanted to enable us to do so?"

"Money," said Osmond; "but we do not need money for that; there is the meadow all ready to put the cow in, and she will bring us money, instead of costing us any, for there will be no more buying of milk and butter."

"Yes, yes," cried several of the children eagerly; "there is the meadow, look at it, full of beautiful grass!"

"True," replied Mr. Gordon; "the meadow would do very well for the summer, but what would our poor cow have to live on in the winter?"

"Make hay for her," cried Edward, eagerly; "the grass will soon be fit to cut."

"But where are the haymakers? There are none that will work without money, that I know of," said Mr. Gordon, smiling.

"Haymakers!" replied Edward, gaily; "are there not half a dozen, or more, in this room?"

"My dear boy," said the father, "you do not know what you are talking of; even if you could shake out and rake the hay, who is to cut it?"

"Edward and I, papa," said Osmond, boldly.

"I will engage, too," said Edward, "that it shall be excellent hay!"

"Did you ever," inquired Mr. Gordon calmly, "have a scythe in your hands? No, no, my boys; you cannot mow."

"We can learn," cried Osmond.

"Farmer Maydew is just going to begin haymaking," said Edward, "and we will go and take lessons of him and Joe."

"It would be far too great an exertion for you," replied Mr. Gordon.

"No indeed, papa," said Edward; "I should not, neither I know would Osmond, mind doing anything that would be of advantage to you; and mamma would be so glad that you could have anything to do you good."

"Thank you kindly, my boys; but I cannot consent; the weather is exceedingly sultry now, and I could not allow you to be for hours exposed to a hot sun."

"We will be up by break of day," said Osmond; "and get half a day's work over before the heat is great."

"And I will be your chanticleer, and call you," said Allen, who was a very early riser; "I shall help, too, myself"

"And so shall I," said Trevor.

"All of us will," cried Frank.

Still Mr. Gordon's consent was withheld; and the boys appealed to their mother to second their wishes; but Mrs. Gordon, though she knew full well the advantage keeping a cow would be to her family, refused in this instance to be their advocate; saying, "She did not think the scheme feasible."

"What, you against us, dear mamma," said Edward, half reproachfully; "I thought you liked us to be useful."

Mrs. Gordon smiled kindly on her son, and replied, "But prudent also, my dear."

"Oh! dear mamma, it is quite prudent, I do assure you," said Edward; and he was joined by all the party in a renewal of eager entreaties to both parents that Beauty might be accepted, and that they might make hay for her winter provision.

After a time Mr. Gordon said, that as he had been so unsuccessful in letting the meadow, he was thinking of selling the crop to any one who would make the hay, and that, by so doing, there would still be a profit on the land.

"You see, therefore," said he, addressing the boys, "that even if your mamma and I did not think what you propose too much for you, there would be a considerable loss incurred by spoiling the hay."

This objection was met by eager declarations from the boys, that they were positive they could make the hay well, and equally strong assurances that their health would not in the least suffer from the exertion.

"Suppose," said Mrs. Gordon, "we let them try a portion of the field, they will then know if they are capable of going on. Certainly, if harm in no shape arises from the plan, the possession of Beauty will be to us a great acquisition."

This proposition of their mother was hailed with delight by the boys, and it was settled that they should rise at dawn on the following day, and go off to Farmer Maydew's to take a lesson in mowing.

Edward and Osmond did not need the call of their brother, for they were already up, when Allen's shrill imitation of cock-crowing was heard on the Gallery stairs, as he gaily bounded up them.

"What, up already," exclaimed he, as he pushed aside the curtain of the sleeping apartment. "The sun is not yet risen."

"We shall have the more time," replied Edward; "and do you have your lessons ready, and I will attend

to you on my return." So saying, he and Osmond set off to the farm.

There is a great charm in early morning in summer; and the brothers, as they hastened along, felt refreshed and invigorated. The twittering of the birds as they waked to life and light; the notes of the nightingale, who had not yet ended her night song; the perfume of the flowers, and the delicious odour of the new-mown hay, all combined to render the walk delightful.

The sun had just risen, and was gilding every object with its glorious beams, when the brothers arrived at the farm. The honest farmer, with his stout son, was just issuing out at the house-door when Edward and Osmond appeared before them. There was an exclamation of surprise at so early a visit from the young gentlemen; and when the object of their errand was explained, Maydew burst out laughing, and declared they were the most "spirited lads he knew."

Maydew readily agreed to give the boys some instruction; but as his time was precious, he added—

"If I do not get on quite so quick with my own work, while I am looking after you and your brother, Master Gordon, may be the help I shall get from you will make it pretty even at the last."

"Why, Farmer Maydew," exclaimed Osmond, "my brother and I shall be among your best workmen in a day or two."

"Humph!" said Maydew; and when he had whetted his scythe, he added, "I hope you will not have cut your legs at the end of two days; and if you can cut off a handful or so of grass by that time, I shall say you have done pretty well."

"How long were you learning to mow, Joe?" asked Edward.

"Oh, not so long as that, Master Gordon; father's only joking; by the end of the time you speak of, you will begin to cut rather pretty, I think; but it is terrible hard work at first."

"Never mind how hard," said Osmond; "what others do, we can do; for we have the same legs and arms. Now begin, there's a good lad, and let us see how you proceed. I like to learn first by looking on."

After about a quarter of an hour passed in watching Joe's operations, a scythe was put into Edward's hands, and then into Osmond's, and they both got on, they thought, pretty well. Joe thought and said they were very clever at their new work. At any rate, they escaped any injury to their legs, and at eight o'clock they returned home, where breakfast awaited them, besides a little party of eager questioners, who were most anxious to know "how they had got on;" for on the skill of their elder brothers depended whether "Beauty" was to be theirs or not.

After the morning meal was over, the usual studies were pursued, and then followed the customary relaxation; but Edward's and Osmond's pleasure they owned was to sit still, and towards evening they found a considerable stiffness in their arms.

"Never mind," said Edward; "we shall sleep all the better for our early rising, and a good night's rest will put us all right;" and so it proved; for even before Allen had sounded his alarm, the brothers issued forth from their chamber with renewed strength and energy for their morning's walk; and not only on that morning, but on

several succeeding ones, they sallied forth at the same early hour.

"I say, Master Gordon," cried the good farmer, on the fifth morning of their labor, "if you and your brother go on so, I shall want your help whenever I am haymaking."

"I should be glad to think," replied Edward, "that we had been of any little use to you in return for yours and Joe's kindness in teaching us."

"Use," repeated Maydew; "I only wish I had a few more like you on my farm. But you are clever lads, and get on well in all you turn your hand to."

There was a good deal of truth in this observation of the farmer's, for Edward and Osmond generally succeeded in what they attempted to do. And this was not altogether from being quicker or cleverer than other youths of their age, for hundreds of others had quite as good abilities. But the Gordons were desirous of learning, and patient under instruction; and, above all, they had now acquired the habit of steady perseverance, without which even genius itself is of no use.

It was a favourite saying of their mother's, that "nothing is denied to well-directed perseverance;" and the boys frequently recalled this maxim to their minds when struggling under difficulties, by which, at first sight, they thought they should be overcome.

In this instance perseverance, as is usually the case when the cause is good, had its reward; for Farmer Maydew told Mr. Gordon that, with assistance, he was of opinion that Edward and Osmond were capable of making the hay in his meadow; and the assistance should come from Joe.

"For," said the good farmer, "your young gentlemen, sir, have helped so much in getting my hay made, that when it is all quite finished, my boy shall come and lend them a hand."

The weather continued fine, and the day after Maydew's hay harvest was over, Joe presented himself at early dawn at the villa,—the scythes had been previously sent. He found the brothers quite ready, and the three lads immediately set to work. Haymaking at the villa was far more agreeable to Edward and Osmond than it had been at the farm, for they could not only have their breakfast earlier, but they could now and then step into the house, either to rest, or to enjoy a little chat with some of the family. Besides which, their parents, and brothers, and sisters, occasionally came out to watch the progress of their work. As soon as sufficient grass was cut to require turning, the other children were allowed to assist, and nothing could exceed the delight of this home haymaking. The elder boys were supplied with forks and rakes from the farm, and the little ones, fancying they helped, tossed about the hay with two-pronged sticks, cut for them by Allen from the woodstack. The little invalid boy, too, was drawn to the field in his chaise, and carefully placed beside a haycock by Frank, where he clapped his hands and shouted with pleasure, as he looked on the cheerful scene before him.

In order to prevent the slightest chance of any accident, the whole of the juvenile party were ordered by their parents to work in three separate divisions. The elder boys, with their scythes, were in front, and Allen and his division, who came next, always kept themselves separated from the mowers by three rows of grass lying

between them, while those still younger were told not to come within a certain distance of the boys working with pitchforks ; and such was the habit of obedience to which these good children were trained, that they adhered to these orders as strictly as if a whole troop of servants had been there to see them enforced.

Mr. and Mrs. Gordon were perfectly at ease, for they were able to place entire reliance upon their children.

Another advantage of haymaking close to home, was the being able to continue the work when the day began to decline. Helen would then come out for an hour, and assist in raking up the hay to be made into cocks, or she would sit beside the spot where her elder brothers were at work, and enliven them with a song, ever and anon suspending the sweet strains of her melodious voice, to listen to the soft cooing of the doves in a neighbouring grove ; or she would gather the youngest children around her, and while the gentle breeze of evening, laden with the perfume of the honeysuckle, fanned their glowing cheeks, she would bid them raise their eyes to the stars, as they came forth, one by one, in the blue vault of heaven, and talk to them of the great and glorious Being who made them, and who was the author of every pleasure they enjoyed.

This evening hour, too, was the period of the greatest enjoyment to all the juvenile party, for after Joe had gone home, every one relaxed in his exertions, till at last the elder boys would lay down their rakes, and throw themselves along upon the grass, while the younger, in unrestricted enjoyment, would roll among the haycocks, or playfully try to smother each other with handfuls of hay.

One afternoon, when all the party were busy at work, and Mrs. Gordon, who had come out with some refreshment for the little invalid, was seated beside him, to enjoy for a few minutes the sweet and cheerful scene, two ladies were seen coming into the field, who, on their nearer approach, proved to be Mrs. Freeman and Miss Marvell.

These ladies had heard of the haymaking that had been going forward among the Gordons both at the farm and at home, and with their usual love of gossip and detraction, had talked of it in such a manner as to have it speedily circulated that the two eldest Master Gordons had hired themselves by the day to Farmer Maydew, and notwithstanding the wages they had received, Mr. Gordon was still so poor that he could not afford to employ labourers, and had turned all his children, girls as well as boys, into his meadow to make the hay.

"Let us go and catch them at it," said Miss Marvell, on the day in question, to her sister.

"By all means," replied Mrs. Freeman.

"And at the same time," said Miss Marvell, "we can tell Mrs. Gordon of the party at Mrs. Hunter's that she was left out of. That *will* mortify her, I think, for I know she always enjoyed this annual *fête*, and made a point of being there with her children."

"Certainly," observed Mrs. Freeman, "it is the pleasantest thing of the kind in the neighbourhood."

"Till this last," said Miss Marvell; "but mum as to all the failures; take your cue from me. But here we are arrived at the gate, and there, true enough, are all the Gordons working like slaves."

A joyous laugh from the merry young haymakers, at

this moment, rather contradicted the notion of slavery; but on came the ladies, like two evil geniuses, desiring to plant a bitter feeling in the tranquil and happy hearts of those they came to visit.

The first salutations over, the strangers paid a few compliments to Mrs. Gordon on the usefulness of her young people, which compliments contained a covert meaning, that would have been plainly perceptible, had the mother been aware of the reports in circulation respecting her children.

Having despatched this first part of their business, though not quite to their satisfaction, for the sting seemed to fail in its effect, they proceeded to the other, and both ladies exclaimed, almost in a breath—

“So, Mrs. Gordon, you were not at Mrs. Hunter’s *fête* last Thursday. It was the most delightful thing ever known.”

“I thought,” said Miss Marvell, “you made a point of always being there; how came you not to be of the party?”

“Yours is the first intimation I have received of the *fête* having taken place,” calmly observed Mrs. Gordon.

“Dear me, how strange!” exclaimed Mrs. Freeman.

“We live in such retirement,” said Mrs. Gordon, “that it is not at all surprising that Mrs. Hunter’s, or any other entertainment, should be given in the neighbourhood, and we remain in ignorance of them.”

“Then it is true,” said Miss Marvell, her eyes brightening with pleasure, that you received no invitation. “People said it was so; but I said I would not believe it!”

“Well, now,” said Mrs. Freeman, “we can tell everybody why you were not there.”

"You will give yourself much unnecessary trouble," said Mrs. Gordon, "on a very unimportant subject."

"I do think," said Miss Marvell, without paying any attention to this observation of Mrs. Gordon, "that it is very extraordinary that you were not invited; everybody else in the neighbourhood was asked. I do not mean the Nobbsés or the Jobsons" (Mr. Jobson was a retired grocer, and Mr. Nobbs a low pettifogger); "they were not asked of course, but everybody else was, who is anybody."

"Yes," chimed in Mrs. Freeman; "everybody but the Nobbses, the Jobsons, and you, were there."

"And above all," cried Miss Marvell, "Lady Amy Arundel and her daughter were of the party. Sir Henry would have come also, if his parliamentary duties had not detained him in London."

"Yes," said Mrs. Freeman, "the proud and exclusive Lady Amy Arundel was at Mrs. Hunter's, and she talked a great deal to Arabella."

"Indeed she did," said the lady so honoured; "and her ladyship and her daughter were so exquisitely dressed. They wore the dresses they were in at the last drawing-room; the very same!"

"And you never saw such a grand entertainment as it was, altogether," said Mrs. Freeman; "the avenue was hung with coloured lamps, and there was a first rate quadrille band."

"Such a supper, too!" exclaimed Miss Marvell; "ices, champagne, and every delicacy of the season in such abundance!"

"And beautiful glee-singing, after supper," said Mrs. Freeman; "we had 'Non nobis Domine' in first-rate style."

"And everybody went away charmed, delighted, enraptured;" and with this climax of joy, Miss Marvell signifying to her sister that it was time to depart, the ladies rose from the haycocks, on which they had condescended to sit, and took their leave, sincerely hoping that they had made Mrs. Gordon very uncomfortable.

In this unamiable wish Mrs. Freeman and her sister had certainly not succeeded. They did not make Mrs. Gordon "very uncomfortable;" at the same time, she doubtless felt the slight of being left out of an entertainment to which she had always hitherto been invited; but attributing the neglect to her altered circumstances, she soon ceased to think about it, having long since been perfectly reconciled to her fallen fortunes, and to every change attendant upon them.

The evening brought another visitor—a lady of the name of Wordsworth—who found the whole of the Gordon family taking tea in the hayfield. The lady was presented with a cup of the refreshing beverage, which she appeared to enjoy, as well as the scene around her.

"This is quite a treat!" exclaimed she; "and how happy you all look. I declare that I like this far better than Mrs. Hunter's *fête*. You had no loss in not being there."

"Indeed!" said Mrs. Gordon; "I was told it was a very charming *fête*."

"In general," replied Mrs. Wordsworth, "Mrs. Hunter's entertainments are very pleasant; but this was quite a failure. I am sorry for it, for Mrs. Hunter is a good-natured person."

"I have always considered her such," said Mrs. Gordon.

Mrs. Wordsworth paused, as though doubtful if she should go on with what she was about to say; but in a moment she continued, "I know we are all among friends, and that these good children never repeat what they hear."

"You may trust them, I assure you," said Mr. Gordon.

"You are aware," said Mrs. Wordsworth, smiling, "of our friend's little failing—the love of great people, and you know, too, how year after year she has striven to get the great people of our neighbourhood, Sir Henry and Lady Amy Arundel, to her annual *fête*. This year crowned her wishes with success; for Lady Amy and her daughter came. Sir Henry was detained in town, but he extorted a promise from his haughty lady that she and her daughter would attend Mrs. Hunter's party; for he is anxious to secure Mr. Hunter's interest, in case the talked of dissolution of Parliament takes place."

"Mr. Hunter," observed Mr. Gordon, "has, I believe, several votes at his command."

"He has," replied Mrs. Wordsworth; "and to this his wife is indebted for the attainment of her darling wish. But, alas for the vanity of human wishes! everything else went wrong, and by some strange fatality, a *fête*, which generally gives universal satisfaction, afforded but little gratification to any of the assembled company. In the first place, the band, which was ordered from London, never arrived; and at a late hour its place had to be supplied by country musicians, but little practised in dance-music. Then the ices never came till after supper; and the man who was engaged expressly to attend the lamps, sent a deputy, who mismanaged them; so that at times there was a great want of light, besides now and then a most disagreeable smell issuing from them."

"How very annoying all this must have been to poor Mrs. Hunter," said Mrs. Gordon.

"At supper," continued Mrs. Wordsworth, "a large party of rude boys, headed by Hugh Wyld, who had forced themselves among the first of the guests into the room, called so incessantly for champagne, that when the second relay of company went in, there was a deficiency of that wine for the ladies."

"Could not Mr. Hunter," asked Mr. Gordon, "have put a stop to this?"

"Mr. Hunter," replied Mrs. Wordsworth, "was not aware of what was going on till too late; he then, I believe, rather sharply reprimanded the young gentlemen; and Mrs. Hunter also, I am told, spoke to them about being noisy during the singing, which, though very indifferent, they had no right to disturb; so that Hugh Wyld, who cannot bear the slightest reproof, got very angry, and in revenge, played his host and hostess a very mischievous trick."

"I wonder if it was like that he played Miss Marvell," said Osmond aside to Edward.

"Worse than that," said Mrs. Wordsworth, who had overheard what Osmond said. "This trick, which is attributed to Hugh Wyld, for it has not been brought positively home to him, might have been attended with serious consequences. Lady Amy Arundel and her daughter went away directly after supper; and as they were proceeding along the illuminated avenue to their carriage, attended by Mr. Hunter, who was overwhelming them with a profusion of compliments upon the honour done him by their presence at his *fête*, down came a shower of lamps on the ladies, covering them with oil from head to foot; bath-

ing their pearls and diamonds in the offensive liquid, and utterly spoiling their beautiful and costly attire."

"How excessively mischievous!" exclaimed the children, breaking through the decorous silence they had hitherto preserved, not to interrupt the lady's narrative.

"Mischievous indeed," said Mrs. Wordsworth; "for had the lamps been broken in their fall, they might have cut the heads and faces of the ladies."

"A most mortifying conclusion of an unsuccessful evening," said Mr. Gordon; "Hunter must have been excessively annoyed."

"So much so," replied Mrs. Wordsworth, "that he declares there shall be no more *fêtes* at Hunter Hall."

"I have no doubt it was Hugh's doing," said Osmond.

"But I do not see," said Edward, "why he selected Lady Amy and her daughter as the objects of his displeasure."

"Because," replied Mrs. Wordsworth, "he no doubt was aware how exceedingly desirous Mr. and Mrs. Hunter were of having those aristocratic ladies pleased; and as the Hunters had made him very angry, he sought this mode of annoying them; besides which, Lady Amy had affronted him herself, for she asked Miss Marvell, to whom Hugh had just been speaking, who that very ill-bred boy was. Master Wyld, I believe, heard her; for he immediately turned round, and cast a very indignant glance at her ladyship."

"How could he contrive the fall of the lamps, I wonder?" said Trevor.

"I dare say," said Allen, "he climbed one of the trees, and cut the wire they were hung on; do you not think so, Mrs. Wordsworth?"

"It is supposed," replied the lady, "that it was done in that manner, and by Hugh; for among other reasons for suspecting him, a handkerchief, marked H. W., was found in the morning lying beside the tree from which the lamps had been suspended."

"I do not think," said Mrs. Gordon, "that we have much to regret in not having received an invitation."

"You had no invitation!" said Mrs. Wordsworth. "Now, then, I can understand what Mrs. Hunter meant by saying 'you were not to be found.' I was about to ask her at the time, but fresh guests arriving, called her off, and this, with the poor lady's annoyances, prevented any further conversation."

"Mrs. Hunter is, I believe, only just returned from the continent," said Mrs. Gordon.

"Only just in time," replied Mrs. Wordsworth, "to send out invitations for her *fête*, which is always on Mr. Hunter's birthday. And to the shortness of the time we may probably attribute many of the *contretemps* that spoiled her usually very pleasant entertainment. There is no doubt, either, I think, that a note was addressed to you at your late residence, and in the bustle of doing things at such short notice, it was never discovered that you had moved. You and your children were always favourites with Mrs. Hunter, I know."

There was something very good-natured in Mrs. Wordsworth's manner as she said this, and Mrs. Gordon felt its soothing effect; for, though it was not of much consequence to her whether she had been intentionally or unintentionally left out of the party of a worldly-minded woman, her philosophy was not of that sort which rendered her insensible to the kindness and sympathy of her fellow-creatures.

How different were the emotions excited by Mrs. Gordon's visitors of that day! The one delighted to scatter roses in the path of life; the other took pleasure in entangling it with thorns and briers.

CHAPTER XIX.

The sailor sighs as sinks his native shore,
 As all its lessening turrets bluely fade:
 He climbs the mast to feast his eyes once more,
 And busy fancy fondly lends her aid.

Ah! how each dear domestic scene he knew,
 Recalled and cherished in a foreign clime,
 Charms with the magic of a moonlight view,
 Its colours mellowed, not impaired by time.

* * * * *

But lo! at last he comes with crowded sail;
 See o'er the deck what eager figures bend;
 And hark, what mingled murmurs swell the gale!
 In each he hears the welcome of a friend.

Now through the whitening surge he springs to land.

ROBERT.

ALTHOUGH the Jarvises have not been lately mentioned, they were not forgotten by their young friends at Myrtle Cottage. During the winter, and up to the present time, Edward and the elder boys had frequently visited them, and rendered them many kind little attentions. They had stocked their garden with vegetables, and planted rosetrees, and sown flowerseeds; besides which they had assisted Jarvis in lopping off the branches of the fallen trees, the "Matthew and Sarah," which the owner had given him leave to have.

During the very busy season of haymaking, these visits had been a little interrupted; but the same evening the last load in the villa meadow was stacked, Edward pro-

posed a run to the cottage; and he and his elder brothers, with Helen, set off to see the old people.

On their arrival, they found Jarvis and his wife in high spirits, for Matthew was come home from sea, and was to remain with them for a week or two.

The party had just returned from the farm, where they had been to call on Mr. Maydew, the old woman dressed in her "Sunday bonnet," which, thanks to Helen, was restored to nearly its original beauty, and a new shawl, the gift of her grandson. The visit had been productive of much gratification, for Maydew had succeeded in obtaining for Jarvis a daily occupation, attended with no more labour than was fitted to his declining strength, and with a very fair amount of wages. The good-natured farmer had also made him a present of a fine young pig, for which Matthew was immediately going to construct a snug home, to be fenced off with paling from the garden.

Helen was also the bearer of a little pleasant news, for she told Mrs. Jarvis that her mamma had obtained a promise from a lady of her acquaintance to give her some needlework to do. Mrs. Jarvis, though now an old woman, had an active turn of mind, and was always desirous of employment, and being still blessed with good eyesight, she was able, whenever she could get work, to earn something by her needle.

Matthew, who had learned from his grandfather and grandmother the full particulars of all the young Gordons had done for them, warmly expressed his gratitude for their goodness to his aged relatives. He seemed heartily glad to see the boys, and entertained them with histories of some of his adventures since they had last met, one of which was of a very serious nature, he having nearly suf-

fered shipwreck on a rock upon which the ship was driven in stress of weather. Matthew laughed at his perils when they were passed ; but they made the old people very unhappy, and they begged Edward and Osmond to join with them in entreaties that their grandson would quit the sea, and resume the trade, that of a carpenter, to which he had been brought up.

Matthew replied, that if a good situation at Stoneleigh could be found for him, he almost thought he would consent to their wishes, as he owned he should like to live near, and take care of the old couple in their declining years.

Edward fell into a fit of musing at the idea of quitting a life full of adventure and interest for the inglorious occupation of a country carpenter ; but Osmond exclaimed, that a carpenter at Stoneleigh, whose name he mentioned, was at the present time greatly in want of hands. The old people instantly begged Matthew to go the first thing in the morning and inquire about the situation, which, to their great joy, he said he would do, and having promised to call at the villa in the course of the next day, and report what success he had met with, the young party took leave of their friends at the cottage, and returned home.

The vessel in which Matthew sailed had been greatly damaged in the gale that nearly wrecked her ; and he had been of great assistance to the ship's carpenter in making the best repairs circumstances admitted of. This, together with the young man's general good conduct, were much in his favour in case an application for character should be made to his captain.

A good night's rest in his comfortable bedroom did not

cause Matthew to change his purpose of going to Stoneleigh to see the master carpenter of whom Osmond had spoken. His errand prospered well, and he returned in good spirits to gladden the hearts of his grandfather and grandmother, by telling them, that as soon as he could quit his ship he would not return to sea, at any rate as long as they lived, and that he would come and take up his abode with them.

In the course of the day he presented himself at the villa, and being desired by Mr. Gordon to do so, he joined the boys in the meadow, where they were busily engaged in repairing, to the best of their power, an old cow-house, for the reception of Beauty, who was to arrive in a very few days.

The boys gladly suspended their work to have a chat with their favourite, and to hear the report he had to make of his errand to Stoneleigh. They all said, even Edward, that they were very glad he was not going to sea any more; and Matthew told them that, whenever they wanted the services of a carpenter, he should be most happy to work for them, not only for old acquaintance sake, but out of gratitude for all they had done for his poor relations.

"And," said he, "with your leave, young gentlemen, I must make a better job of that outhouse there, that you were at work upon when I came up, and I must put some hurdles round your haystack to keep Mrs. Beauty off from her winter provision. I see you have some pieces of wood which will serve for the repairs of the cow-house, and a few of those saplings in the hedgerow yonder, if we may have them, will do exactly to make the hurdles of."

"Thank you, thank you, Matthew!" exclaimed the boys; "we shall be most glad of your assistance."

And then it was settled that Matthew should go home, and work that day for his grandfather, and be with them the next morning by sunrise.

Mr. Gordon, who offered no objection to this plan, but was, on the contrary, very glad of such obliging assistance, suggested the propriety of making the fence round the haystack first, because, as soon as that was done, the cow might be brought to her new home. The sale at Mr. Vernon's was over, and that gentleman being about to quit the country directly, it was necessary to provide a safe place for his favourite cow.

Matthew was true to his appointment, and without neglecting the old people, to whom he was a most kind and dutiful grandson, he contrived to get through so much work at the villa, that, to the delight of the children, Beauty was grazing in the meadow much sooner than they expected, and Mrs. Gordon had the satisfaction of seeing her husband provided every night and morning with a glass of delicious new milk.

The cow proved, indeed, a most valuable acquisition to the whole family, and as the present servant could dairy, there was a good supply of excellent butter, besides an abundance of milk for the use of the children.

The servant who supplied the place of Agnes was strong and willing, and relieved Mrs. Gordon and Helen a good deal in their household duties. She was also very good-tempered, and the children got attached to her. One evening, soon after the arrival of Beauty, she unfortunately slipped down stairs, and strained her ankle so badly, that she was obliged to go off to bed; and there was no prospect of her being able to rise the next day.

All the young people were very sorry for poor Han-

nah, and felt that they should miss her obliging services; at the same time, they agreed that they had become so much accustomed to wait on themselves, that it would in reality make very little difference to them the being without a servant for a few days, at the end of which time they hoped Hannah's ankle would be recovered.

"I should not care in the least," said Helen, "about our being without the help of a servant for a little while—and I shall be glad to do all I can to supply her place—but to-morrow being papa's birthday, mamma, and all of us, you know, want him to have a little treat, and we cannot very well do without Hannah."

"It is unlucky," said some of the party.

"Very," replied Helen; "for Hannah was to have churned to-morrow. We have no butter, and all the cream will spoil, the weather is so very sultry."

"No butter, and no cherry-pie," exclaimed Harry.

"And no cakes either, I suppose," said Willie, rather piteously.

"But we can have the custards, I think," said Fanny; "they do not want butter to make them."

"That is something," said Frank; "and there will be fruit out of the garden, and vegetables."

"Oh! we should do very well," said Edward, "and have a very pleasant day, if papa was only better."

"He is never in the least difficult," said Osmond.

"No, never," replied Helen; "papa is always contented with what he has; but I do wish he had some butter for his birthday breakfast."

"I wonder," said Allen, "in this age of invention, people cannot contrive to do without butter. I have a great mind to turn cook and confectioner myself, to see what could be done."

"I think," said Helen, "you would have to eat your dainties yourself; no one would be inclined to rob you of them. But the little ones are getting sleepy, and I had better take them off to bed; and if, in the mean time, you young gentlemen think of anything very wise, you may tell me of it when I come down."

"I will carry Charlie up stairs," said Edward; "for though he is much better since Frank and Harry have undertaken to be his nurses, he still must not be allowed to fatigue himself."

On coming out of the little children's bedroom, Helen found Trevor on the stairs, waiting to speak to her.

"Is it you, then," said Helen, laughing, "who of all the party have found out something wise to tell me about?"

"Yes—no," answered Trevor; "no; not wise, certainly; but come into my room, and I will tell you what I have been thinking of."

Helen followed her brother, who shut to the door, and then taking a key out of his pocket, he unlocked a little box, and produced half a crown, which for a long time had been hoarded up, with the intention of adding to it whenever he could, to purchase a four-shilling book on gardening, which he greatly desired to possess.

"I want you to take this money," said he, "part of it to purchase butter with, that dear papa may not be without on his birthday, and the remainder I wish to have spent in cakes, as there can be none made at home. I want you to send one of the other boys to buy the things at Stoneleigh, that nobody may know who gave the money. I do not want any praise."

Helen was very much pleased with Trevor for his proposal, and considered that he had gained a great victory over himself in making it.

"It is very kind of you, dear Trevor," said his sister, "to part with your money, especially as I know how very desirous you are of having your favourite work on gardening."

"I shall not mind not having the book," said Trevor; "I can do very well without it. I shall not think any more about it, now I know I cannot have it."

"How very pleasant it is," said Helen, "to do kind actions. We feel far happier, I think, when we please others, than when we are only striving to obtain what we like for ourselves."

"I have often," said Trevor, "when I have gone to Jarvis's cottage, and seen him and his wife sitting together, felt very glad that I had helped to make them so snug and comfortable."

"It is worth all the best plants in the world, is it not?" exclaimed Helen.

"I am very fond of plants and flowers," said Trevor, "and they give me a great deal of pleasure, but that is a very different sort of pleasure, it is——" and the boy paused, not knowing exactly how to express his feelings.

"That pleasure is of a higher kind, and more lasting; I think that is what you would say, dear Trevor," said his sister.

"Yes, that is what I mean."

"Now let us talk of your halfcrown," said Helen.—"It strikes me that papa would not like so much money spent upon what is not really necessary."

"But it is for a birthday," said Trevor; "and I do not want to hoard up my money for myself."

"I do not wish you to do so," said Helen; "but I think you might lay it out in something much more useful for papa."

"So I might," said Trevor, brightening at the idea; "I might buy him, at a future time, a penknife, to replace his which he broke yesterday; that will be a much more durable present."

"And now," said Helen, "guess what else I have been thinking of. You cannot guess, I see, so I will tell you."

"Do," said Trevor; "I dare say it is something pleasant."

"I have a great notion that I could make the butter myself. I have often amused myself, at the other house, by looking on while the servant was making it. I have a great mind to try; what do you say?"

"You might try with a little of the cream," said Trevor, rather startled at the daringness of his sister's proposal.

"No, that would not do," replied Helen; "if I had to make butter twice, I should never get it done, and after all, if I did not succeed, the cream would be equally lost. Yes, I will try, and you must help me to turn the churn; so, after all, you will provide the butter."

Trevor laughed, and the brother and sister parted, after agreeing that they would be up at sunrise, in order to have their occupation over before breakfast.

"I wish," said Helen, when she and Trevor met in the morning, "we could keep our little scheme to ourselves. It will be such a surprise if I succeed, and mamma will be so pleased on account of papa; and if I fail, Allen will know nothing about it, and he cannot laugh at me, and call me a disconcerted dairymaid. Not," added she, a few moments after, "that I really mind his jokes, he is so good-natured with them."

"It is only half-past four o'clock," said Trevor, "and we shall have done the butter before any one else is up. Every one went to bed tired last night."

"Oh!" replied Helen, "they will all be up in an hour, or an hour and a half at the latest, I am certain; and however hard we work, we cannot get the butter made, I fear, by that time."

"Let us bolt ourselves in," said Trevor

"That will do," cried Helen; "and now let us begin directly."

Helen set about the business in a proper manner; but from some cause or other the same ill luck attended her exertions, that has provoked the patience of dairymaids from time immemorial. In vain she and Trevor, by turns, worked at the churn, sending the wheel round with due precision, and never relaxing in their toil; the butter would not come. Six o'clock struck, and no butter; and to add to the discomfort of both sister and brother, Trevor was called away.

Trevor was wanted to go to Stoneleigh for a lotion for Hannah's ankle, which, though easier, was still very much swelled.

"Mamma says I must go directly," said Trevor, as he ran to tell Helen why he had been called away.

"What can we do?" said Helen, as with a heightened colour she laboured on with her work.

"I do not know, indeed," replied Trevor; "Edward and Osmond are gone after Beauty, who has strayed away, Allen is busy with papa, and mamma wants Frank to help her."

"There is Harry," said Helen, "send him to me, he will be some help; but mind no one else finds out what I

am about. I really begin to think I shall succeed, after all, for the cream seems thickening."

"I wish you may," said Trevor, running off; "I will send Harry, and be back again myself as soon as possible."

Helen's prognostic proved true; and her little brother had not much else to do, but watch the progress of the formation of the butter into rolls and pats, under his sister's skilful hand.

The breakfast hour had from some cause or other been luckily delayed, so that Trevor returned in time to enjoy the results of his and Helen's mutual labour.

"Is it not beautiful?" exclaimed Harry, as Trevor, well pleased, counted the number of well-formed rolls and tempting-looking pats, as they lay on the dish, where his sister had placed them.

"Now, let us go into the breakfast-room," said Helen; "Frank is calling for us, and saying mamma and papa and all are there." So saying, she took up the butter-cooler, in which she had placed one of her pats, and Trevor following with the dish, Harry ran on before, and throwing open the door, cried out—

"We have made the butter!"

Exclamations of surprise burst from all the party as they surveyed, with satisfaction, the ample supply before them.

The elder children joined with their parents in commending the thoughtfulness and skill of Helen, and the younger ones jumped about the room, joyfully saying that they should now have their promised treat.

Mrs. Gordon said she had no idea that Helen could have accomplished such a task; and Helen replied that

she certainly could not have succeeded, if Trevor had not greatly assisted her.

Both his mother and father felt well pleased at this obliging conduct on the part of Trevor; who, though exceedingly manly, had not refused his assistance in an occupation which many boys would have thought derogatory to their dignity.

"Thank you, my boy," said Mr. Gordon, "for your wish to give me pleasure; and I must also commend you for having put aside all selfish feeling, by quitting your own proper pursuits, to lend your willing assistance in a case of emergency."

Nothing was said at this time about the penknife, for Trevor reserved his gift for a future day. Helen having reminded him that his papa had desired that the children should not expend any of their little savings in presents for him on his birthday.

But what need had Mr. Gordon of any tokens of his children's love, beyond what their daily and hourly conduct afforded him: they were kind, obedient, and dutiful.

Children can make their parents bless and rejoice in the hour they were born; or they can make them weep in bitterness of heart, and long to die.

CHAPTER XX.

Let us

Act with cool prudence and with manly temper,
As well as manly firmness.

ROWE.

Hears but the dashing steel, the armed train.

BULWER.

The character of a soldier is high. They who stand forth the foremost in danger, for the community, have the respect of mankind.—DR. JOHNSON.

There is a drowsy state, between sleeping and waking, when you dream more in five minutes with your eyes half open, and yourself half conscious of everything that is passing around you, than you would in five nights with your eyes fast closed, and your senses wrapt in perfect unconsciousness. At such times a mortal knows just enough of what his mind is doing, to form some glimmering conception of its mighty powers, its bounding from earth, and spurning time and space, when freed from the restraint of its corporeal associate.—CHARLES DICKENS.

THE summer and autumn glided peacefully and happily away with all the Gordon family; and when Christmas arrived, they were as completely at home in their new abode, and as entirely reconciled to their change of circumstances, as if they had never known any other.

The children pursued their studies with diligence, while their moral and religious training suffered no abatement from their parents. Neither were those graces of manner, nor those accomplishments neglected, which soften and adorn society.

The elder boys were now beginning to show a decided turn for those professions which, could circumstances favour them, they would be inclined to follow.

Edward, seeing no prospect, "at present," as he said, of getting a commission for the army, turned his attention to the law; and, under his father's direction, he was making some progress in the study, besides practising

himself in the various kinds of writing used in the profession.

Osmond had applied himself so diligently to drawing, and had succeeded so well in the likenesses of his own family, and every person he could coax into sitting to him, that there was every probability of his doing well as a portrait-painter.

Allen wished to be a civil engineer; and his designs of churches, and his other architectural plans, evinced taste and originality of conception.

Trevor's ambition was to be a doctor, as he said that "it must be so grand to walk into a room, and have everybody hanging round to hear your opinion, and fly to obey your orders; besides the pleasure of making sick people well, must be so very great."

Frank said he should go and be a clerk to Edward, when he was a big lawyer; and bid him make haste and get into practice. But there was little chance for Edward, or any of his brothers, getting out into the world, for Mr. Gordon had neither money nor interest; and it cost him many a sorrowful hour when meditating upon the insurmountable difficulty, as it appeared to him, of placing his sons out in the world in situations fitted to their station and education.

Edward, as the eldest of the family, was the most aware of the importance of himself and elder brothers getting soon out into life; and his desire was intense, not only to relieve his parents of the burden of his maintenance, but to be the means of bringing an increase of income, and restoring to them many of the comforts of which their reduced means deprived them. He looked at his amiable mother untiring in her efforts to make every

one comfortable and happy, and at his suffering father, patient and uncomplaining, and wished from his heart he could be of assistance to them. Many an hour he lay awake at night, turning over in his mind a variety of schemes by which to further this object; and once he proposed to his mother to let him go off to London, with half a crown in his pocket (the whole of his worldly store), to seek his fortune there, saying he was certain that he should make his way well, and not only forward remittances to her, but send for some of his brothers to share in his success.

Mr. Gordon had made many applications to his friends and others to assist in finding a situation for his eldest son, but all his efforts had hitherto proved unsuccessful, and Edward was growing more and more impatient, when one day, at the commencement of the spring season, Mr. Jackson, a solicitor from Stoneleigh, called at Myrtle Cottage, and desired to speak with Mr. Gordon.

This gentleman had the second practice in the town; and though his clients were not so numerous as those of Mr. Gordon or his successor, still he had a fair amount of business; and, through his saving habits, had contrived to amass rather a large income. He was also agent to Sir Henry Arundel.

Mr. Jackson was of a suspicious nature, and somewhat obstinate. He was exceedingly punctual in his habits, and scrupulous in exacting from others strict attention to orders. He was perfectly fair and open in all his transactions, and expressed a decided aversion to every kind of chicanery. He was somewhat dry and austere in his manners; but when he met with worth of character, he often evinced both warmth of heart and generosity.

With youth he was a rigid disciplinarian, and showed very little leniency towards faults which arose from inattention or carelessness.

Mr. Jackson opened his business by stating that a copying-clerk had suddenly left him, and occasioned a vacancy in his office, which he found it necessary to supply; observing, at the same time, that though his other clerks were quite capable of performing the little extra employment thus caused, they refused to do so, alleging that their labours were already sufficiently onerous.

"I wonder," exclaimed Mr. Jackson, "what we shall come to; young men are not what they were in my time!"

"I believe," replied Mr. Gordon, "young men turn out according to the manner in which they are brought up. At the same time, we must not too severely tax the exertions of even the most diligent."

"Well, well," said Mr. Jackson, rather impatiently, "never mind about that. It is your sons I am going to speak of; I believe you have educated them pretty well; taught them to be diligent, mind orders, and not to be pert and flippant to their seniors and superiors in knowledge. This is the case; is it not, Gordon?"

"I trust so," replied Mr. Gordon, rather amused with his visitor's manner.

"I know," continued the former, "you are a respectable man yourself, and conducted your business creditably, and perhaps your sons may take after you. At any rate, I am ready to make a trial of one of them, if you can let him come to me directly; for I am unusually busy just now."

Mr. Gordon replied that it was his intention that his eldest son should follow the profession of the law,

and that he had desired to place him out in a superior situation, where he could have the advantage of study and instruction; but his poverty forbidding the realization of such a hope, he would accept Mr. Jackson's offer.

"There is always a beginning to everything," said Mr. Jackson; "and if I like your boy, I mean, if he does his duty, he shall not want either instruction or the opportunity of reading. At present he can only copy. I heard he can engross."

Mr. Gordon replied that Edward was well skilled in the necessary kinds of writing; and Mr. Jackson then arranged with the father the salary to be paid to the son, and the hours at which the youth's attendance would be required at the office.

Edward's joy at learning the result of Mr. Jackson's visit was great in proportion to the desire he had experienced of getting out into life, and being of assistance to his parents. He was entirely satisfied with the nature of his employment, and looked forward with perfect certainty to rising, at a future time, to one of the higher branches of his profession. As to Mr. Jackson being strict, and exacting the most rigorous attention to duty, he was positive his own conduct would be such as to render it impossible he should fail in giving his future master entire satisfaction. The hours, too, were so pleasant; only from nine o'clock till five! and his pay he thought abundant; in short, everything was so thoroughly in accordance with his wishes, and so delighted was he, that he seemed to tread on air as he walked from the villa to Stoneleigh on the first morning of his entering on his new career in life.

"I am going to earn money for my family," repeated he to himself over and over again, as he hastened along.

But his blissful dream was fated to suffer a short interruption, by witnessing a sight, which one of Edward's nature could not behold unmoved. A big boy was beating a little girl right in the path before him, and the child was screaming with pain as the boy continued to inflict several severe strokes on her with a switch he had in his hand.

"I will teach you to tell tales of me," cried the child's brutal assailant, while the little girl reiterated that she had done no such thing.

Quick as lightning Edward rushed on, calling to the boy to desist; but he went on beating the child, wholly regardless of Edward's cry.

"Leave off; let the child go!" exclaimed Edward; "or I will treat you in the same manner you do her."

But the boy paid no further attention to this threat, than to seize hold of the child's arm, and spin her round and round, in a way to render her perfectly dizzy.

Edward darted upon the boy, and with a stick he had in his hand, inflicted summary punishment upon him. He gave the boy a severe beating, and thrust him with violence on to a bank by the road-side. Then taking the little girl by the hand, he led her to a cottage not far off, which she said was her home.

In the evening, when Edward returned to the yilla, his mind was so fully occupied with all that had occurred connected with his new situation, and he had so much to tell of Mr. Jackson and his fellow-clerks, that the adventure of the morning wholly escaped his recollection, and he



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said nothing about it; but the next day, on his return from Stoneleigh, the affair was very unpleasantly brought to his recollection. As soon as he had dined, his father informed him that Mark Dennis had been to lodge a complaint against him, for violently assaulting his son; and that he was going to summon Edward to appear before the nearest magistrate to answer the charge. Mr. Gordon said he was startled at the accusation, and told Dennis that he must be labouring under some mistake, as he was sure his son had not been guilty of the conduct imputed to him.

"And I spoke the more positively," continued Mr. Gordon, "because I felt assured that if anything of the kind had occurred, you would have informed me of it."

Edward was consternated by what his father told him; and immediately related all that had occurred respecting the little girl, both as regarded the brutal treatment she had received, and the punishment he had inflicted upon her assailant; and he added, what has been already stated,—that his mind being so occupied with matters of great importance to himself, he had quite forgotten to speak of the circumstance.

Mr. Gordon blamed Edward for his hasty conduct, and lamented the unpleasant situation in which he had placed himself.

Edward was much concerned; but he asked his father how he could have avoided acting as he had done, under circumstances that called for such prompt interference; adding, that he did not think that he had half avenged the child's wrongs on the brutal boy, who was so shamefully illtreating her.

Mr. Gordon replied, that it was a great temptation to

act as Edward had done ; but, he said, that in thrashing the boy, it was his own feelings that he had gratified, and that he would have served the child's cause as well, if he had only interfered to separate her and her assailant ; indeed, it was most probable that it would have been better for her had he done so, as the beating he had given the boy might tempt him to revenge himself on the object who had caused him to receive the chastisement.

Edward looked both perplexed and distressed. " You know," continued Mr. Gordon, " that you had in reality no right to punish the boy for his ill conduct ; at the same time, that you would have been quite justified in separating the parties, and remonstrating with the boy."

Edward said he did not think remonstrance would have had any effect, the boy seemed so thoroughly hardened.

" It would have done good for the time," replied Mr. Gordon ; " but at any rate you would have protected the child from further violence, and have led her home. It is much to be regretted that you did not act with more coolness, for I fear you have involved yourself in a good deal of trouble, for Dennis is a daring, bad man ; and I fear no reasoning or persuasion will deter him from his purpose, especially as he says he can bring forward a witness to the affair."

" Do you think, papa," inquired Edward, anxiously, " that this affair will prejudice Mr. Jackson against me ?"

" I do not know what to say as to that," answered his father ; " Mr. Jackson has very peculiar notions, and though told that you were espousing the cause of a little defenceless girl, he might be very much dissatisfied that

one of his clerks was summoned, to answer a charge such as Dennis will bring against you."

"How unfortunate I am!" exclaimed Edward; "and how unhappy! And then there will be the fine. Oh! how can that ever be paid? Little did I think when I was so happy yesterday morning, that I should be feeling such sorrow to-night!"

"I will go to-morrow morning," said Mr. Gordon, "and speak to Dennis, and try, if by placing the matter in a proper light, and letting him know that you were interfering in behalf of a little girl whom his son was cruelly using, I can induce him to abandon his purpose."

Edward thanked his father for the ray of comfort this proposal imparted, but he was very much distressed, and he could not sleep for thinking, that instead of bringing an accession of comfort to his parents on first starting in life, he should involve them in trouble and pecuniary embarrassment. Neither were his feelings destined to be relieved on the following day; for on his return from the office in the evening, his father informed him, that though he had been twice to Dennis's cottage, he had been unable to meet with him, he had only seen the man's wife, *who gave herself great airs* on the occasion, and declared that nothing would deter her husband from prosecuting his intention. She said her husband hated the gentry, who were always trying to depress and ill-use the poor; and he would not give up his revenge upon one of them for any sum of money that might be offered him.

Notwithstanding this bravado on the part of his wife, Mr. Gordon went the next and several succeeding days, to endeavour to get a sight of Dennis, till at last it became very evident that the man was purposely keeping out of

the way; fearing, as Mr. Gordon imagined, that he might, by some means or other, be induced to give up a purpose on which he appeared to be resolutely bent.

Still no summons arrived; and at last, at the end of a week, it was found out that some little transactions of Dennis's, which would not bear investigation, made him think it prudent to keep himself in the back-ground, and caused him to abandon his purpose of summoning Edward.

But his son Stephen was heard to declare that he would never rest till he had his revenge on "that fine gentleman, as he thought himself, Master Edward Gordon."

Edward laughed at this threat, and, inexpressibly relieved at the happy termination of the affair, his spirits rose to almost their previous exalted state; and in the delight of bringing home to his parents his first fortnight's salary, he wholly forgot his recent trouble.

Mr. Gordon, thinking it not improbable that the late event might, some time or other, reach Mr. Jackson's ears, counselled his son to make himself a statement of the facts to his master,

Edward followed his father's advice, and, not without a degree of trepidation, recounted his adventure with Stephen Dennis and the child, and its attendant consequences.

Mr. Jackson heard Edward in silence; and when he had told his tale, the man of law raising his eyes over his spectacles, simply said—

"Hot-headed."

Edward longed to say,

"No, not that, sir,—warm-hearted, if you please;" but he restrained himself, thinking that if he had, he

might come under the category of pert and flippant, which he knew his master held in utter abhorrence.

Edward was in all respects most desirous of giving Mr. Jackson satisfaction ; and if strict attention to orders, punctuality as to time, and a thoroughly respectful deportment, could win a master's regard, this youth was in a fair way to succeed. Indeed, after a few months passed in Mr. Jackson's service, it became evident that that gentleman began to look upon his young clerk with some degree of favour. He took the opportunity, now and then, of giving him instruction in his profession ; and allowed him the occasional use of those books which are indispensable to the study of the law. Edward was very glad of these advantages, especially as he was beginning to like his profession, and was gradually losing his former predilection for the army. He also read at home, and he continued his habit of very early rising, that he might attend to his other studies, and be enabled to give his younger brothers their customary lessons. During a part of the evening, he enjoyed the relaxation of a little music with his family, occasionally joining in a glee or accompanying his sister in a duet on the concertina.

Thus passed Edward's days. Obedient, diligent, and useful, he had never felt happier in his life.

About four months after Edward had been in the employ of Mr. Jackson, that gentleman's head clerk was summoned to attend the death-bed of his father, and it happened, very unfortunately, that just at this precise time the other clerk went home ill,—thus a great increase of work devolved upon both Mr. Jackson and Edward.

Mr. Jackson talked of calling in temporary assistance,

but many days passed and none arrived. Edward felt his powers of exertion severely taxed, frequently working late of an evening, and arriving at the office at an earlier hour than usual in the morning; still, he never complained, nor in the least relaxed in his diligent attention to all he had to do. Mr. Jackson, too, held out the hope of extra pay, and this alone would have been enough to reconcile Edward to any additional labour,—so delighted was he at the thought of taking more money home to his family.

Late one afternoon, when Mr. Jackson and his young clerk were sitting hard at work, a messenger arrived in great haste to summon the lawyer to attend upon a gentleman who had just been thrown from his horse, and who desired to make his will before his death, which was expected every minute.

Mr. Jackson, pushing his papers from him, rose, and snatching his hat, hastily quitted the office.

He had not been long gone, when Edward, who, as he pursued his mechanical employment of copying, had fallen into a fit of pensive musing on the uncertainty of human life, was aroused by the sound of music. He listened; the sound became louder and louder, till he was electrified by the harmonious crash of a military band, sending forth the inspiring strains of a warlike march. He rushed from the office, and pulling open the house-door, beheld a regiment of dragoons passing along in all their glory, on their way to a garrison town in the adjoining county. It was a fine sight! There were the horses, with their redundant manes and tails, splendid in accoutrements, and perfect in shape and colour, with the men as firmly seated in their saddles as if they made a

part of the animals on which they rode. Then, the men themselves, tall and majestic, with their glittering, plume-crowned helmets; their white gloves, their polished swords, and, above all, their gay uniforms. On they paced, in all -

“The pomp and circumstance of war;”

while the officers, many of them men in the flower of youth, whose air and manner told of high and gentlemanly breeding, reined in the prancing and impatient steeds on which they rode.

Edward stood transfixed in admiration, every pulse throbbing with excitement, and his love of a military life and desire for glory rushing back upon his mind with tumultuous force. He longed for some one to share his enthusiasm, and seeing his friend Howard standing a few doors off, he approached him, to give vent in words to a portion of his feelings.

Howard, who had also a hankering after a soldier's life, participated warmly in Edward's admiration of the exciting spectacle, and as long as the music was within hearing, the two friends stood talking together. Edward then returned to his office, and resumed his work, which now appeared to him intolerable drudgery. With a mind wholly preoccupied, he drove his pen along the parchment, scarce heeding what he wrote, till, in about two hours from the time of his departure, Mr. Jackson returned, and released Edward from the irksomeness of his situation.

“I am afraid I have kept you very long from your dinner,” said Mr. Jackson; “but I was detained in the town after making the poor gentleman's will, and I am now wanted immediately in another quarter, so I will release you, and if you will step out with me, I will lock the

office-door, and give up further business till the morning." So saying, Mr. Jackson turned the key, and putting it in his pocket, walked away, while Edward pursued his road homewards.

That evening Edward could not think nor talk of anything besides the superb dragoon regiment that he had seen passing through Stoneleigh in the afternoon. He got his brothers to pace up and down the room with him, giving the word of command, and marshalling his little troop, as if he had been at the head of a regiment, while he made Helen perform marches, till all the party began to tire of playing at soldiers, and Fanny, who had been enlisted in the service, at last ran off, saying, she was so fatigued she could not march any longer.

"Do not soldiers kill men?" asked the little girl, as she placed herself on a low seat beside her sister.

"To be sure they do," cried Osmond.

"How shocking!" exclaimed Fanny; "soldiers must be very cruel people!"

"You talk," said Edward, "like a silly little girl, who does not know what she is saying."

"I do not quite think that," said Helen.

"You don't!" exclaimed Edward. "Are not soldiers the finest and bravest of men!—men who leave their homes, and risk their lives in defence of their country?"

"True," said Helen; "there will be wars, and we must have men to defend us. But I rejoice that I am not a man, and obliged to fight in defence of my country. It must be dreadful to shed blood!"

"Give me the arts of peace," said Osmond.

"And so say I," cried Trevor.

"Oh, that I was a dragoon officer!" exclaimed Ed-

ward; and whistling a march, he paced up and down the room, wrapped in visions of prancing black horses, splendid uniforms, battle-fields, and military glory, till, the effervescence of his feelings somewhat subsiding, he seated himself in a corner of the room, to pore over a history of Wellington's campaigns till he retired to bed, where he fell asleep with the strains of martial music still ringing in his ears. He dreamed he was a general, who had just gained one of the hardest-fought battles ever known, and, covered with glory and honours, he woke to prepare himself for quill-driving, as he now styled his occupation at Mr. Jackson's office.

On his way to Stoneleigh, Edward fell in with one or two stragglers, who, detained at the town for some cause or other, had not marched that morning with the regiment. Edward accosted the soldiers, and they, pleased with the admiration he expressed of their horses and their own equipment, willingly answered the eager questions put to them by the young gentleman. Their regiment had been in an engagement, the details of which, as he read them, had particularly interested Edward, and he could have lingered the whole day to hear all the soldiers had to tell about the battle; but the church clock striking, warned him that he was already beyond his time, and hastily tearing himself away from the exciting histories he was listening to, he entered the office half an hour beyond the appointed time.

Mr. Jackson was seated at his desk, and to Edward's morning salutation he returned no answer, nor took any further notice of him, than to raise his eyes to the clock over the mantel-piece, and then fix them on the somewhat disconcerted countenance of his young clerk.

"I am sorry I am so late, sir," said Edward, "but——" he paused.

"Do not let us waste any more time, if you please, sir," said Mr. Jackson, whose penetration of a character so single-minded as Edward's led him immediately to detect that no sufficient excuse for his tardiness was about to be offered.

"The deed you were about yesterday," continued the stern man of the law, "is wanted immediately. Is it finished?"

"Yes, sir," replied Edward; "I completed it just before I went home to dinner."

"You will please to hand it me," said Mr. Jackson; and Edward laid the parchment before his master.

Mr. Jackson went carefully over the deed, every now and then comparing it with some sheets of written paper that lay beside him, but apparently without perceiving anything wrong, till he came to the part on which Edward had been engaged after witnessing the entrancing spectacle of the dragoon regiment. At this place Mr. Jackson's countenance began to darken, and when he arrived at the end, he said, frowning portentously—

"Your thoughts, Mr. Edward Gordon, must have been far away from your business when you were finishing this deed; the latter part of it is full of errors."

Edward coloured with vexation, for he felt no doubt that, occupied as his thoughts had been, he had most probably made many mistakes. He rose, with the intention of having the errors pointed out by his master; but Mr. Jackson, folding up the parchment, flung it from him, exclaiming, "Useless, perfectly useless!"

Edward drew the parchment towards him, and began

examining it, with a faint hope that the errors might be rectified.

"Pray, sir, did any one call at the office during my absence, yesterday afternoon?" asked Mr. Jackson, in a tone of voice that grated very unpleasantly on Edward's ear.

"No, sir," replied Edward, "not any one."

"Not any one?" repeated Mr. Jackson, and he fixed his eyes on Edward in a manner, and with an expression of countenance, that sent the youth's blood, annoyed as he already was, rushing over his temples and cheeks.

Mr. Jackson paused, hemmed once or twice, then opening his desk, removed some letters, then replacing them, he turned full upon Edward, and said—

"During my absence, sir, yesterday afternoon, a five-pound note was taken out of my desk."

Edward looked and expressed surprise; for so upright and honest was he in his innermost heart, that the awkwardness of his situation did not for a moment strike him.

He suggested to his master, that he had probably overlooked the bank-note, and advised his searching again among his letters.

"I have already," replied Mr. Jackson, sternly, "searched twice through my desk, opening and examining carefully every letter and paper."

"Perhaps, sir," said Edward, anxious that Mr. Jackson might recover his note,— "perhaps you put the five-pound note in some other place, or have mislaid it somewhere or other."

"I am not in the habit, sir," replied Mr. Jackson, austere, "of mislaying my money, or of putting it in

places where I cannot find it. No, sir; I placed that bank-note in my desk yesterday, a few hours before I went out to make the gentleman's will, and this morning I find it gone."

"It is very singular," said Edward.

"Very," repeated Mr. Jackson, in a tone which, if words could cut literally as well as metaphorically, would have wounded Edward; but he, in his simplicity, saw nothing more than that his master's temper was very much ruffled by the disappointment caused by the unfortunate mistakes in the parchment; and as the best way of restoring him to his equanimity, he proposed immediately doing the deed over again.

"I will work hard at it," said Edward, "and will take it home and write all night. I should be most glad to make any amends in my power for my inattention, which I very much regret."

Mr. Jackson muttered something about the absolute necessity of having the deed immediately, and Edward set instantly about it, working with the closest application till a late hour, and then, when Mr. Jackson left the office, he carried it off with him.

On his arrival at home, Edward went direct into the Gallery, and providing himself with a light, resumed his occupation, and when one of the little boys came to call him to his dinner, he told him to bring him a piece of bread, and desired that no one would disturb him till Osmond came to bed, when he wished to have a cup of strong coffee brought him.

As it was well known in the family that Edward would not thus absent himself without sufficient reason, his wishes were complied with, and he remained wholly uninterrupted

till Frank passed through the Gallery to the sleeping-apartment. Edward motioned to the little boy not to speak, and with the exception of a brief statement of the nature of his employment to Osmond, he continued exclusively occupied with his task, writing on through the hours of the night.

Towards morning, Edward became very drowsy, and going down for a jug of fresh water, he took off his clothes and bathed himself till he infused new life and vigour into his system, then returning to his writing, he did not again quit it till it was finished.

Carefully folding up the parchment, he went in quest of a glass of new milk, which he drank, then taking a piece of bread in his hand to eat on his way, he started off for Stoneleigh, and arrived at Mr. Jackson's office just as that gentleman entered. As soon as his master was seated, Edward laid his work before him, and Mr. Jackson went carefully through the perusal of the parchment, then laying it on one side, he proceeded to write a letter.

"Is it well-done, sir?" inquired Edward.

"There are no mistakes, sir," answered Mr. Jackson, drily.

Edward had hoped for a few words of commendation as a reward for his exertions, which had not been trifling. But as none came, he concluded that he did not deserve any, and he asked Mr. Jackson what he would like him to do.

"There is the mortgage-deed of Clarkson and Williams to finish," said Mr. Jackson; "I told you so yesterday, Mr. Edward Gordon."

"Oh! yes; I remember now," said Edward; "I beg your pardon, sir, for having forgotten."

Mr. Jackson looked steadily at Edward, and remarking that he looked exceedingly pale, asked him abruptly if there was anything on his mind.

There was something so harsh in Mr. Jackson's manner, that Edward's pale cheeks flushed. He could have told him that he was exhausted by having set up the whole night to serve him, but he was silent, and seeking for the deed, seated himself quietly to work, determined by diligent application, and submissive conduct, to regain, if possible, his master's favour, which it was very evident he had been so unfortunate as to lose.

The day passed without any interchange of words between the two, except a single sentence now and then, relating to business.

Edward, who possessed great self-command, resolved to control his thoughts, and whenever they turned upon the exciting subject that had caused his late trouble, he expelled them as fast as possible; at the same time, it cannot be denied, that when the contrast of a gay young officer's life and his own laborious occupation forced itself into his mind, a heavy sigh would now and then escape him.

CHAPTER XXI.

And hard unkindness' altered eye.

GRAY.

A busy time with Mr. Jackson was now coming on; namely, receiving the rents of Sir Henry Arundel's tenants. One or two of the most prompt in their payments had already called, and among these was a poor, but

honest and upright man, who paid into the agent's hands the five-pound note that has been already stated to have been lost.

Of this loss Edward had ceased to think; having felt convinced, at the time, that Mr. Jackson must have either dropped or mislaid the note; and never for a moment, most assuredly, did it enter his thoughts that his master suspected him of having abstracted the money from his desk. At the same time it became very evident that he had not only lost Mr. Jackson's favour, but that that gentleman put no manner of trust in him.

One morning, when Mr. Jackson was out, one of the principal tenants called to pay his rent, and the agent not being in the way, he left the money with Edward, saying that there was a deficiency of seven pounds, which he would make good the following week, when he hoped markets would bear a better price than they had lately done.

On Mr. Jackson's return to the office, Edward delivered up the money, and gave the tenant's message.

Mr. Jackson looked dissatisfied, and said it was very odd that Mr. Cobb should have left seven pounds unpaid; he had never, in all the years he had known him, been a defaulter before. He inquired how long it was since the tenant had been at the office, and finding it was not more than half an hour since, he said he would go and seek for him to inquire into the matter.

Edward, in a straightforward way, said he did not think Mr. Jackson need give himself that trouble, for Mr. Cobb had fully explained why he had not brought the whole amount of his rent; and he felt assured, from the tenant's manner, that he meant to make good the deficiency next week.

To this Mr. Jackson made no reply, further than to give Edward a scrutinizing glance as he went out of the office. He was not long gone, and Edward concluded that his master had been unsuccessful in his search, as he chanced to see, in the course of the day, a letter, ready for the post, directed to Mr. Cobb, lying on Mr. Jackson's desk.

Every day brought fresh tenants with their money, and Mr. Jackson generally contrived to be in the way when they came to the office. Sometimes his business took him out at those hours when the farmers most usually called, and he gave Edward a strict injunction to receive no more money, but to tell the tenants to call again. It happened that, for two days successively, three or four tenants, who were usually very slack in their payments, called when Mr. Jackson was out; and when, on his return, he learned the men had been, he seemed very much annoyed, fearing, no doubt, that from not taking the money when it was offered, he might ultimately have some trouble in collecting it; besides, he knew that his duty to his employer required him to have a responsible person to receive the rents at those times when business compelled him to be away. The constant demand on his time out of doors, and the necessity for his being at his office, so irritated and perplexed Mr. Jackson, and made his temper so irascible, that he was more harsh and imperious towards Edward than ever. It was not, therefore, without considerable pleasure that the poor youth one afternoon saw the head clerk, Mr. Finch, walk into the office, and resume his customary duties.

Mr. Jackson seemed as much relieved as Edward.

Although Edward's situation had of late been exceed-

ingly unpleasant, he had not said much about it at home, and his parents, after their son's exertions to make amends for his negligence respecting the ill-written deed, imagined that he was restored to the degree of favour he had previously enjoyed with his master. As regarded the bank-note, they thought, with Edward, that Mr. Jackson had either mislaid or lost it, and the circumstance passed from their minds.

Edward was of an open, candid nature, always delighting to make known to his family all that was good in his career, and never desiring to conceal what was the reverse; and as to his faults, he never sought to hide them.

The reason of his deviation from his usual custom respecting his situation at Mr. Jackson's was, that just after the affair of the deed, Mr. Gordon was seized with a severe attack of rheumatic fever, which, up to the present time, confined him to his bed. His father's illness necessarily occasioned a great deal of anxiety of mind to his mother and all the elder branches of the family; besides which, the fatigue attendant upon waiting on one so helpless, as a sufferer under this complaint always is, was very great.

Edward would not add to their troubles by relating his own; determining, as he said to himself, to bear them like a man.

The evening of the senior clerk's return, Edward went home in better spirits, and finding his father suffering a little less pain than usual, and his mother appearing rather happier, he was enjoying a pleasant chat with his brothers and sisters, when Mr. Gordon sent to desire that he would go up stairs to him directly.

"Edward," exclaimed his father, as the youth took a seat beside him, "what am I to understand by this letter;

what can it mean?" and Mr. Gordon placed a letter in his son's hand, which ran thus:—

"SIR,—Desiring no longer to retain your son in my office, I dismiss him from my service. Inclosed is the amount of a fortnight's salary due to him this day; the remainder of the money (an ample sum) is to remunerate him for a few extra hours of work.

"Your obedient Servant,
"ISAAC JACKSON."

The letter dropped from Edward's hand, and he gazed at his father in a state of perfect bewilderment. He took it up again, and reperusing the contents, exclaimed,—

"I know the man hated me! but how have I deserved this abrupt dismissal? He treats me with no more consideration than he would if he was discharging his footman."

"There is not a word of explanation," observed Mr. Gordon.

"Nor could he give any, if he desired," replied Edward; "I never offended him, except in the instance of the deed, and then I did all in my power to repair my fault."

"Certainly you did," said Mr. Gordon; "I cannot understand what Mr. Jackson means. His mode of addressing me, if there was nothing else, is very uncourteous."

"And then," exclaimed Edward, "such paltry remuneration for my extra hours,—my 'few hours,' as he calls them. I have sat labouring for that man at my desk till I was sick at heart; but," added he, a moment or two afterwards, "I should have worked willingly and cheer-

fully, glad to earn a little additional money, if he had not been so harsh and severe with me."

The conversation was here interrupted by the arrival of Mr. Gordon's medical attendant, and after he was gone, either from the excitement produced by Mr. Jackson's letter, or some other cause, the sick man became so much more unwell, that he was unable to talk any more that night.

Edward sat up with him till nearly morning, and during his father's short snatches of troubled sleep, Edward was deeply pained to hear him continually utter Mr. Jackson's name, together with his own, joined to lamentations on lost opportunities, blighted prospects, and other expressions of similar import.

At dawn of day Mrs. Gordon relieved her son from his attendance on his father, though Edward would have preferred watching by his side, and have allowed his pale and care-worn mother to continue the repose of which she appeared to stand so much in need.

Soon after Mrs. Gordon's entrance into the sick-room, her husband roused up, and asking for writing materials, dictated a few lines to Mr. Jackson, begging to be informed for what reason he had so summarily dismissed Edward from his employment. Mrs. Gordon highly approved of this step, and the note was immediately despatched.

Several hours elapsed before an answer was returned, during which time Edward was in a state of painful excitement—a feeling which was in no small degree shared by his parents, elder brothers, and sister.

"He must give some reason," said Edward, "for his conduct towards me."

"It is a satisfaction, at any rate," said Osmond, "that

this hard man will be forced to explain himself. But here comes the messenger with the letter."

Edward started up, and catching the letter from the messenger, rushed up-stairs with it to his father's room.

"Open it yourself, my dear," said Mr. Gordon, faintly.

Edward did as desired, and read as follows :—

"SIR,—Since you press for a reason as to why I decline your son's further services, I reply that my business requires that I should have a person about me in whom I have confidence. In your son I have none.—Yours obediently,

"ISAAC JACKSON."

"What does he say?" exclaimed the sick man, striving to raise himself in his bed; "no confidence in my son!" And Mr. Gordon looked in amazement at Edward.

"Why had the man no confidence in me?" ejaculated Edward, whose anger was roused by Mr. Jackson's impertinent letter, as he styled it. "I never neglected his work, and never made any great blunder but that of the deed I brought here to write. Does he expect that I shall be careless again, or has he such an unforgiving spirit that he never will forget or pardon that fault?"

"There must be something behind," said Mr. Gordon; "there must be some deeper offence than the one you allude to."

"There is none other," said Edward, bold in conscious rectitude. "Surely, papa, you do not doubt me?"

"I do not doubt you, my son," replied his father; "I am far from doubting you; and such an opinion have I of

your principles, that, did I suspect you had done anything wrong while in Mr. Jackson's employ, I should attribute it solely to inexperience or inadvertence."

Edward looked comforted, and his father continued, "There is something so strange in this business, that without we are able to find some clue, I cannot comprehend it. It would be folly to suppose that a man like Jackson discharged a youth who has been so serviceable to him for one fault; for your other mistakes, you say, were not more frequent, nor of greater magnitude, than those of Mr. Finch, or the other clerk."

"If I might say so without appearing vain," said Edward, "they were much fewer."

"And we cannot attribute your late master's conduct to caprice; he is not a man to lose valuable assistance because he dislikes the person who serves him."

"At one time," observed Edward, "I thought I was getting into favour with him."

"It would have been strange," said Mr. Gordon, "had it not been so. You were punctual in your attendance, and I should suppose were never off your post when Mr. Jackson was absent."

"Never," replied Edward: "I should as soon have put my hand in the fire, as have left the office without his leave. I never, for even a few minutes——" Edward stopped suddenly, the colour mounted to his cheeks, and his breathing became short, as a solution of the strange case flashed into his mind.

"How extraordinary," exclaimed he, "that I never thought of it till this moment,—that dragoon regiment turned my head! I now remember well, that on the day it marched into Stoneleigh I left the office and went out

into the street, and stood talking to Howard for some minutes."

"Did you shut the door after you?" asked Mr. Gordon.

"I cannot tell," replied Edward.

"How far off did you go?"

"As well as I can recollect," answered Edward, "we stood by Thompson's, the tailor's. Yes, I am sure we did; for now I remember Henry Milwood coming out in a new jacket, and asking me how I liked it; but I could see nothing, think of nothing, but the dragoons."

"Thompson's is three doors from Mr. Jackson's office," said Mr. Gordon.

"It is," replied Edward; "and quite far enough, occupied as my mind was, for some one to have entered it, and——"

"And stolen the note," eagerly exclaimed Mr. Gordon; "and I feel no doubt that Jackson's mean and suspicious nature has led him to accuse you, in his own mind, of the theft."

"I feel assured it is so," said Edward; "and that has been the cause of all his apparent mistrust in me, and my being dismissed from his service directly he got other assistance. But how shocking," added Edward, after a pause, "to be suspected of dishonesty! Why did not the man tell me at once that he suspected me, and give me an opportunity of clearing myself. I would have told him that I would die sooner than touch one of his paltry shillings. Why did not the fellow speak out?"

"Because," replied Mr. Gordon, "Jackson is much too cautious a lawyer to commit himself by bringing an accusation against any one that he has not the means of proving."

"Contemptible, mean, selfish!" exclaimed Edward, warming into a renewal of angry feeling against his late master; when changing his tone to one of more moderation, he continued, "Mr. Jackson knows you, papa, and knows how you have brought me up; and he cannot, when he comes to reflect, think that I really had robbed him. He must believe that some rogue entered the office when I was away, and all the town looking after the soldiers, and stole the five-pound note out of his desk. Surely he cannot think otherwise; do you think he can, papa?"

"Were I in his situation," replied Mr. Gordon, "I could not; but Jackson is a very peculiar character."

"The thing is so obvious," urged Edward, "that even he could not doubt."

Mr. Gordon did not immediately answer, and Edward saw that something was working in his father's mind; after a time, Mr. Gordon said,—

"If it had not pleased God that I should be confined just now to my bed with illness, I would have gone to Jackson and have talked with him. It would be no use writing; for, with his odd notions, I know he would make excuses not to come and see me."

"How unfortunate that you cannot go," exclaimed Edward.

"I should think so too," replied Mr. Gordon, "if I did not feel assured that our concerns are ordered for the best, by Supreme Wisdom; and now I reflect, it seems to me that you would be the best person to go; you can state to him all that happened just as you have told me; first begging him to tell you if your dismissal is owing to his losing five pounds while you were employed in his office."

Edward would have much preferred his father's visit.

ing Mr. Jackson for the purpose of giving and receiving an explanation; but as that could not be, he offered no objection to go himself.

It was too late in the day to set off then; but on the following morning, Edward, with a beating heart, bent his steps towards Stoneleigh. On his way thither, he thought he would deliver in a note, requesting Mr. Jackson to see him; but on reflection, he considered that this would not be the best mode of proceeding, and he resolved to present himself without any preliminary notice before the formidable personage, on whose reception and behaviour towards him so much that was important depended.

Edward hoped to find Mr. Jackson alone, for his whole soul revolted at the idea of defending himself from an implied charge of dishonesty before a third person. Should Mr. Finch be in the office, he determined, however strange it might appear, to retire without speaking.

As he walked along, Edward schooled himself into firmness; and when

"Come in" was said, in answer to his rap at the office door, he presented himself before his late master with a calm and collected air. Mr. Finch was out; and Edward immediately stated the purport of his call.

He opened his business by stating, that had his father not been confined to his bed by severe illness, he would have waited on Mr. Jackson himself. Edward then requested his late employer to inform him if the dismissal he had received was in any way connected with the missing five-pound note.

Mr. Jackson, who was seated at his desk with a large pile of papers before him, began arranging them without making any answer to Edward's inquiry.

Indignant at such contemptuous treatment, Edward broke forth into a warm and not altogether discreet commentary on Mr. Jackson's letters, and ended by asking that gentleman what reason he had for saying he had no confidence in him ; and he was proceeding to state how zealously he had served him, and how desirous he had been to give satisfaction, when Mr. Jackson abruptly interrupted him, by saying, that he was not accustomed to be questioned in such a manner, and that he was too much engaged at the present time to attend to anybody, even though the person knew how to behave himself to his seniors in knowledge and in age.

"Oh! Mr. Jackson," exclaimed the agitated youth, "forgive me if I have spoken with too much warmth; and do, I entreat you, listen to what I have to tell you;" and in a rapid mannner he made a statement of all the reader knows connected with the arrival of the dragoon regiment in the town, and of the supposition he entertained that during his short absence from the office, some evil-designed person had entered there and stolen the bank-note from Mr. Jackson's desk; finishing his hasty narration by owning that it was wrong in him to have been off his post, even for the few minutes he was away, and that he sincerely regretted the fault he had committed.

"And pray, Mr. Edward Gordon," said Mr. Jackson, when his late clerk, with heightened colour and glistening eyes, ceased to speak,—“pray, sir, why, when I first mentioned to you that some one had abstracted the note from my desk, was I not told this long rodomontade story?”

"I never thought of it, sir," replied Edward.

A smile, inconceivably bitter, curled Mr. Jackson's usually firmly-compressed lips; when seeing that Edward

still stood before him, as if waiting for him to speak, he said—

“Really, Mr. Edward Gordon, my time is too precious to be wasted in this manner; and I must wish you good morning.”

Edward felt the inutility of remaining any longer, as he was convinced it was wholly out of his power to change the preconceived notions of his late master; and with the vague hope of being again restored to his favour entirely banished from his mind, Edward bowed in silence and quitted the office.

CHAPTER XXII.

I sat me down more heavily oppressed, more desolate at heart than e'er I felt before.

THOMPSON.

See what a ready tongue suspicion hath.

SHAKESPEARE.

Even sickness hath its sources of fervent enjoyment. There is no place like the sick-chamber for proving the worth and affection of those whom we delight to gild with every sensibility, and to gift with every virtue.

JANE PORTER.

Hope in disappointment lost.

GRAY.

Excited as he had been, and deeply as his feelings had been wounded during this interview, Edward maintained sufficient mastery over himself not to betray all he felt. But once away from the stern, inflexible man, who had treated him with so much contumely, concealment was no longer necessary. Turning out of the high street, he took a short cut through the back part of the town that led to some meadows; entering these, he deviated from the beaten track, and went on till he arrived at a little retired copse. Plunging into the midst of this, he threw himself on a

fallen tree, and burst into a flood of tears, that he had neither the power nor the wish to control.

After a time, his feelings became sufficiently composed to take a review of all that had passed during his visit to Mr. Jackson, and of his situation generally. It appeared to him but too evident, that the suspicious man of the law really and truly believed that his late clerk had robbed him of his money. Certainly he had not declared such to be his belief; but if it was not, why had he not said so at once, and also why did he not give credit to his history of having left the office, and the supposed consequences of this step, instead of signifying, as plain as words could do, that he thought it a tale invented for the occasion. Then Edward next considered whether Mr. Jackson's conduct towards him would have any baneful effect on his future prospects in life. He shuddered when, for a moment, he thought it possible that it might; but, with the sanguineness of youth, he soon expelled such a painful idea from his mind. But it was far more difficult, nay impossible, to reflect with any degree of composure upon the overthrow of his prospects, looking forward to them, as he had done, as the means of advancing not only himself, but his brothers, in the world. It had been his pride and delight to think that he should be useful to his family, for he considered that he had made a fair start in life, and was in a way to get on well with his profession. His gratification, too, had been very great, at being able to increase by his salary, small as it was, the pecuniary means of his parents.

And then this blow to come when his father was so ill, and his mother so worn and weary with watching! How sad it was!

The poor youth's courage failed him at the thought of

going home. It was the first time in his life that he had ever felt unwilling to return to his family. But how could he bear to tell the bad news he had to impart !

"If," thought he, "I had not brought this untoward business on myself by my own folly and misconduct, I should not care half so much. I see now how wrong I was to have left the office, even for so short a time. My duty forbade me to quit my post, and yet, when temptation fell in my way, I was so weak as to forget everything but my own gratification."

Again and again Edward turned the whole business over in his mind, and strove to see if there was anything to be done to mend the matter. But it was all in vain ; no bright spot of hope appeared.

During all this time, a cold autumnal wind was shaking the branches of the trees above the spot where he sat, and a heavy rain fell pattering on the withered leaves that strewn the ground. But he heeded not the inclement weather, and it is doubtful how much longer he would have remained in this spot, if he had not thought that his protracted absence might occasion uneasiness at home. Reluctantly, therefore, he rose, and bent his steps towards the villa.

Far different were the feelings of the late master from those of his discharged clerk ; no sense of uneasiness disturbed his equanimity, no thought that he had been harsh and unjust towards Edward crossed his mind. On the contrary, Mr. Jackson was perfectly satisfied with his own conduct, and felicitated himself upon the penetration of character, and quickness of perception, he had displayed in the recent affair.

To do Mr. Jackson justice, he fully believed that the

purloiner of his five-pound bank-note was Edward, and, with his sentiments towards young men, he might almost be considered to have acted with both moderation and forbearance. Never for a moment did the thought enter his head, that it might be well to reason with, or endeavour to reclaim an erring youth. No; the utmost extent of his goodness consisted in his resolution not to publish Edward's disgrace.

"I certainly did think," said he to himself, when he had determined upon dismissing Edward from his employ, "that one of Gordon's sons might have been different from the ordinary run of boys; but they are all alike; put temptation in their way, and then none of them can withstand it."

Mr. Jackson had never had any children of his own, and his experience of youth was, with the exception of his clerks, almost entirely confined to his nephews, who were wild, unprincipled lads, who took every opportunity of imposing on, or defrauding their uncle. A character so simple in its integrity as Edward's had never till now come before Mr. Jackson, and he did not understand it. The youth's calm manner, when he first heard the note was gone from out his master's desk, was set down by that gentleman as hardened effrontery. And the blush that mantled Edward's cheeks during Mr. Jackson's unpleasant scrutiny of him, was attributed to the fear of detection; and as to the straightforward statement of having left the office to look after the dragoons, he considered it to be a tale fabricated for the occasion.

That Mr. Jackson would miss the services of one so tractable, obliging, and diligent, cannot be doubted; and during the first week or two after his dismissal of Ed-

ward, he regretted that circumstances had prevented his retaining the youth in his service. But Mr. Jackson was not a man to indulge in idle regrets, and he soon ceased to remember Edward. He never mentioned his name, or alluded to him after he was gone, except one day, when a difficulty occurring in making up some accounts, he said, inadvertently—

“I have not had another bank-note taken out of my desk, I should suppose;” then a moment or two afterwards, finding that his calculations came right, he added, as if talking to himself, “No more of that now.”

No one was present at this time but Mr. Finch, and these words of Mr. Jackson seemed to throw some light on a subject that he had been puzzled to understand aright, namely, Edward being no longer in Mr. Jackson's employ. When Mr. Finch was called away from Stoneleigh, to attend upon his dying relative, he left Edward in high favour with his master.

Mr. Finch's was not a particularly amiable nature, and he had watched Mr. Jackson's growing partiality for his young clerk with considerable jealousy, and feelings very nearly akin to dislike were fast growing upon him. Mr. Finch looked forward, with what foundation is unknown, to being taken, one day or other, into partnership with Mr. Jackson, and Edward, he feared, might chance to come in the way of his promotion. Such being his sentiments, he was not a little pleased at the discharge of his rival, as he considered Edward to be. Mr. Finch had been struck with Mr. Jackson's altered manner towards Edward, which was sufficiently visible, though the two clerks were only one day together after the return of the elder. Mr. Finch was puzzled to find a cause for this

change, and not being able to discover any, he ventured to sound his employer as to the reason of Edward's being no longer in the office.

Mr. Finch was not successful in extracting any information on the subject, for whenever his clerk alluded to it, Mr. Jackson maintained a profound silence, and Mr. Finch's curiosity remained wholly ungratified till the accidental allusion by Mr. Jackson to a lost bank-note seemed to give him a clue; and as he sat writing in the office, his thoughts were often directed to Edward, and Edward's loss of favour with his master, till he came to a conclusion very satisfactory to himself, that his rival had been guilty of dishonesty, had been found out, and discharged from the office.

In the evening, when Mr. Finch went home, he could not resist communicating his suspicions respecting Edward to his sister. His sister did not know Edward personally, but from the pure love of gossip, she repeated to a friend what her brother had said, and this friend told some one else what she had heard, with a little addition of her own, to make the tale more interesting; so by the time it reached Mrs. Freeman and Miss Marvell, a report was spread all over Stoneleigh that Edward Gordon had robbed Mr. Jackson to a large amount, and was sent home in disgrace.

Few persons really believed in this exaggerated account, but there was enough of suspicion attached to Edward to make his situation very painful, had he been aware of the reports in circulation about him.

For a considerable time after his discharge from Mr. Jackson's, Edward's thoughts and attention were chiefly engrossed by his father.

Mr. Gordon, although he did not impart his apprehensions to his son, greatly feared that the unfortunate termination of his clerkship at Mr. Jackson's might be detrimental to Edward's future success; and this thought so preyed upon his mind, that, weakened as he was by previous suffering, he became so ill as greatly to alarm his wife and children.

Edward was aware, though not to the full extent, of his father's great concern at his losing his situation, and he redoubled his care and attention to him, sitting up with him frequently the whole of the night, and never quitting the premises during the day.

All the children were most kind and attentive to their suffering parent, but Edward considered his father had a double claim upon his love and duty, from the distress of mind he had so unhappily been the means of bringing on him.

After several months of great suffering, attended with considerable danger, Mr. Gordon's complaint took a favourable turn, and he began slowly to recover.

Edward's unremitting attention upon his father, combined with the distress of mind he endured, rendered him so thin, and caused him to look so pale, that Mr. Gordon was deeply concerned at his son's appearance, and insisted on his quitting the sick-room for several hours in the day, besides which he formed many pretexts for sending the boy out from the house, that change of scene might revive him, and restore him to his wonted health and strength. He was often despatched on errands to the town; and it was on these occasions that Edward began first to suspect, and then to feel assured, that reports to his disadvantage had been circulated among the inhabit-

ants. His bows to common acquaintances were received with coldness, and among those with whom he had been intimate, there was a distance of manner plainly perceptible. Some persons when he called made excuses not to see him; and where he was admitted, there was a reserve kept up that made his visits painful.

Osmond, to whom he talked without reserve, told his brother that he imagined all these slights; and that long confinement in his father's sick-room had rendered him low and dejected. Edward tried to fancy Osmond was right; but one day, when both brothers called at the house of a gentleman in Stoneleigh, something occurred which, though apparently of trifling importance, convinced one so sensitive to the value of character as Edward, that imagination had no share in his trouble.

Mr. Crampton—that was the name of the gentleman to whom the brothers had been sent on an errand from their father—was, at the moment of their entrance into his study, engaged in exhibiting a collection of coins, some of them very rare, to a party of ladies and gentlemen. The boys seeing Mr. Crampton so busily employed, did not directly interrupt him to deliver their message, and being fitted by taste and education to take a lively interest in what was going on, they drew near, and joined in the examination of several cabinet drawers full of coins that were placed on a table.

Edward especially delighted in ancient history, and in the sight of so many relics of antiquity, that carried him far back into remote ages, lost all sense of uneasiness. He was engaged in an animated discussion with a lady of the company on the character of one of the Cæsars, holding at the same time a coin of that emperor's reign in his

hand, when Mr. Crampton, in a manner not altogether gracious, demanded the coin, and placed it in the drawer from which Edward had taken it. Edward, fully occupied with his conversation, would not have remarked anything particular in this, if Mr. Crampton had not immediately removed to his own side of the table another drawer, to which Edward had turned to seek fresh amusement, and in a few moments afterwards said, "I miss my brass Otho," and fixed his eyes on Edward.

"Here is your brass Otho," said one of the company, handing up the rare coin; but Edward had turned away, and retired to a far corner of the room; where, beckoning to Osmond, he begged him to deliver his father's message to Mr. Crampton, and then return with him home.

Osmond did as desired, and the brothers took their leave. For some time they walked on in silence, when Edward, with a bitterness of feeling he could not repress, exclaimed,—

"There was no imagination there!"

Osmond had observed the little scene that had passed, and full of indignation against Mr. Crampton, cried,—

"My dear brother; despise Mr. Crampton! Despise them all! Pitiful creatures, who know not your value, who cannot appreciate your worth of character."

"Dear Osmond," said Edward, in a voice tremulous with contending emotions, "you feel for me; you would console me; but there is no stemming the tide of popular opinion; that is strong against me at present, and who knows how long it may remain so?"

Osmond continued to offer to his dejected brother all the consolation in his power; and in his love and tender sympathy, Edward found some relief from the painful feelings with which he was oppressed.

On arriving at home, the brothers agreed that this fresh cause of annoyance should not be spoken of. Indeed, Edward had been very cautious never to mention to either of his parents, suffering as they were, the one from illness, the other from anxiety, the various slights and mortifications he was now constantly subject to.

Osmond deeply felt his brother's painful situation, and did all in his power to cheer and comfort the poor youth; walking with and talking to him, and engaging him in pursuits likely to interest him. One day he told Edward a regiment was going the next morning to pass through Stoneleigh, and proposed to his brother that they should walk to the town to see it on its march, when Edward exclaimed, almost shuddering,—

“I would go a hundred miles another way first. I hate the very name of soldier; I attribute to it the whole of my misfortune.”

Often when talking over the affair of the lost five-pound note, the brothers said,—

“If it were but possible to find out if any one entered the office when there was no person in the way, and stole the note!” for the boys were of opinion that it was far more likely that the note had been removed from Mr. Jackson's desk, than that he should have lost or mislaid it.

In the hope that some light might be thrown on the affair, Edward paid a visit to Greenfield, the man whose little boy he had been the means of saving from being crushed to death by the waggon, on the day of Hugh Wyld's dangerous exploit on the railway bridge.

Greenfield, a shoemaker by trade, was of a reflective turn of mind, and was a shrewd, observant character, and when he took any business in hand, he pursued it with zeal and energy.

When Edward called on him, Greenfield had heard the reports in circulation to the youth's disadvantage, and having known him from childhood, he felt very indignant at such a charge being laid against one whom he would have staked his existence was, to use his own expression, "honest as the day."

"I have already," said he, when Edward solicited his assistance in the matter, "asked every one I know, who was about that day, if they chanced to observe any suspicious-looking person enter Mr. Jackson's office; but I can learn nothing from any one. All Stoneleigh, it seems, were looking after the dragoons, and saw nothing else."

Edward sighed heavily.

"Never mind, Master Gordon," exclaimed Greenfield; "never mind; the wicked will be sure to be found out, and innocence will triumph."

Very soon after this visit, which took place about a month from Edward's dismissal by Mr. Jackson, Greenfield left the neighbourhood to succeed to his father's business at Longford, the garrison town before mentioned.

Edward regretted the loss of his humble friend; at the same time he felt the removal was advantageous to him; as, in his present situation, he had to struggle hard to obtain a living for himself, his wife, and child.

About the same time, or rather before, another personage, who has been incidentally mentioned in this history, quitted Stoneleigh.

Stephen Dennis, the cruel boy who beat the little girl, absented himself one night from his father's house, and went off no one knew where.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Are you in earnest? Seize this very minute!
What you can do, or think you can, begin it!
Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it!

LONGFELLOW.

Right prayer requires the whole heart, for there is no greater thing in the whole world than right prayer. For prayer, joined with faith, is the instrument where-with we receive the benefits of God. . . . We must believe that he may and will help us. But what slothfulness is in our hearts! How slender a faith have we! How imperfect and cold is our prayer! So that it is no marvel that it is not heard of God.—BISHOP LATIMER.

No man living is equal to attaining the very faith that is necessary to his salvation without the special aid of the Spirit of the Godhead.—COOPER.

In order to divert his mind as much as possible from dwelling upon what was painful, Edward applied himself with increased energy to his various studies. Even the law was not neglected, little as he now hoped ever to get on in that profession. He read Blackstone with diligence, and whenever his father was able to attend on him, he availed himself of his instruction.

His brothers, too, came in for a full share of Edward's attention, for he was unremitting in his endeavours to bring them forward in their learning; and, with Helen's assistance, he took great pains in instructing the younger boys in the grammatical part of the German language, and by conversing with them in that tongue, he kept them from forgetting the fluency of speech they had acquired while Agnes was a resident in the family.

The French language all the young Gordons spoke with ease, having been in the habit of conversing with their parents in French from their infancy.

Beside the progress made in the usual routine of study, one or two of the elder boys were getting on rapidly in some of their other pursuits.

Osmond, by invariably devoting two hours a day to copying casts from the antique, of which Mr. Gordon possessed a good collection, improved himself greatly in drawing. In colouring, although he possessed a good eye for it, he was not so successful. In this branch of his art, however, he was so fortunate as to meet with unexpected assistance.

A first-rate artist from London, travelling about for the benefit of his health, took a fancy to reside some time in Stoneleigh. During his rambles about the neighbourhood, he chanced to call in at Farmer Maydew's, and there, hanging over the mantel-piece of their common sitting-room, he observed Osmond's portrait of Joe, with his little dog Wasp beside him. Something in this picture attracted the artist's eye, and he begged to have it handed down to him, and on near inspection he observed such indications of superior talent, that he desired to be informed by whom it was done.

Joe, who happened to be present, not only told who it was that had painted his likeness, but gave such an account of the goodness and superior attainments of Osmond, that the artist expressed a wish to see the young gentleman, and requested Joe to tell him that he should be very happy if he would call on him, and bring some more of his portraits with him.

Joe lost no time in delivering the message with which he was intrusted, and Osmond, who knew the artist by reputation, having first obtained his parent's permission, set off, highly delighted, to visit him at Stoneleigh. The result of this meeting was, that Osmond received an invitation to go as often as he liked to the artist's residence; and during a month that he remained in the town, the boy never failed to make him a daily call.

These visits were productive of great improvement as well as amusement to Osmond; for the artist allowed him to see him paint, at the same time that he talked to him in a very instructive manner about the art, and enforced the necessity of close attention to nature.

He also bid Osmond bring any drawing he was engaged upon for him to look at, and during its progress the artist gave his young friend many most useful hints; and he especially taught him that most valuable quality of a portrait-painter, the producing a likeness without heavy shadows.

While Osmond was thus gaining improvement by study and instruction, Allen was making great progress in his branch of the art. He was indefatigable in laying down plans and making designs, adhering in all of them to the strictest rules of perspective; but he stood more in need of help than his brother. Allen did not possess any of those instruments and mechanical aids which so greatly abridge the labour of architectural draftsmen. He was at times sadly puzzled how to get on, and wished earnestly he had money to purchase the helps he stood in need of.

Allen was a very energetic character, and without being in the least forward or obtrusive, he never suffered timidity or false delicacy to interfere where he had an important point to gain.

One morning—it was a holiday—having sat for hours fagging at a drawing of the interior of a cathedral, he went into Mr. Gordon's room, and said to him—

“Papa, may I go to Stoneleigh this morning, and when I am there may I do what I wish?”

“I have no objection to your going to the town, certainly,” replied his father; “but as to the other part of

your request, I can say nothing about it, for I do not know what it is you design to do."

"I had rather not tell you that, papa," said Allen; "still, if you desire it, I will. But I should be glad not to have to say what I want to do; it is nothing wrong, you may trust me."

"I believe I may," said Mr. Gordon, looking at the boy's honest open countenance; "but what says mamma?"

"Oh! my dear mamma will not object, I know," exclaimed Allen, throwing his arms round his mother's neck, and affectionately kissing her; "she will trust her own Allen I know;" then gaily quitting the room, and first pausing a moment outside the door to hear if he was called back, he darted off, and hastily gathering together some of his drawings, placed them in a portfolio, and marched away with them to Stoneleigh.

Arrived at the town, he proceeded along High-street till he came to a turning which led him to a crescent, at the further end of which stood a handsome-looking house. Allen mounted a flight of steps, and knocked at the door, the brass plate of which indicated it to be the residence of Mr. Mason, architect.

To Allen's question, "Is Mr. Mason at home?" the servant replied in the affirmative, and the boy was shown into a parlour adjoining the architect's office.

Allen knew Mr. Mason by sight, but had never spoken to him.

After waiting a quarter of an hour, which to Allen appeared more than double that time, Mr. Mason made his appearance, and demanded the nature of the boy's errand.

To any one less determined than Allen to persevere in what he considered a good cause, there was something so

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ALLEN AND MR. MASON.

sour and forbidding in the architect's countenance and manner, that he would have shrunk from stating his business, and have immediately quitted the house.

Allen breathed rather short, and sought temporary relief in untying the strings of his portfolio.

"Be quick, if you please," said Mr. Mason, "business of importance requires my immediate attendance."

Allen placed a dozen of his best drawings in the hands of the architect.

Mr. Mason lifted up the corners, and glanced slightly at as much of the drawings as such an inspection of them was capable of affording; then, with freezing coldness, he said—

"Well, sir, what are these brought to me for?"

Allen received back his drawings, the result of months of laborious work, and placing them on a table, he, with a rather tremulous hand, selected from among them his favourite design for a church, and holding it before Mr. Mason, said—

"If you please, sir, look at this."

Mr. Mason did so, and then looking at Allen, asked—

"Who did it?"

"I, sir," replied Allen.

"Yes, yes," said the architect impatiently, "you copied it; but whose design is it?"

"Mine, sir," answered the boy.

Mr. Mason drew in his breath, so as to produce a sound something resembling the sharpening of a file, then carrying the drawing up to the window, he examined it more closely, and Allen's anxious ear caught a few muttered words, from which he made out that the architect considered his design as something surprising for one so

young, and that from some important errors in the construction of the edifice, he did not doubt its being original.

"Where did you learn drawing?" asked Mr. Mason, when he had concluded the examination of Allen's church.

"At home," replied the boy.

"You must have had great advantages, at the same time disadvantages, there," observed Mr. Mason.

"My disadvantages are very great," said Allen; "and I came here to ask your aid."

"In what way?" inquired Mr. Mason, resuming his frigid manner, which for a minute or two had been a little relaxed.

"I have no instruments necessary for my employment," said Allen.

"I have none to give away," said Mr. Mason, buttoning his coat tight over his breast.

"I had no intention," replied Allen, "of asking you for any, without making you a return."

"A return," repeated Mr. Mason, "what return?"

"I wish to work for you," said Allen, "till I have earned money to the amount necessary for making the purchase of the apparatus of an architectural draftsman. I heard in the town lately that your business increases much, and that you want farther assistance.

"You heard what is true," said Mr. Mason, not altogether averse to make a good bargain for himself.

"You shall find me most industrious," said Allen, eagerly; fancying that he saw a change favourable to his wishes taking place in the architect's countenance.

"What is your name?" inquired Mr. Mason.

"Allen Gordon," replied the boy.

"Son of Gordon, late solicitor of Stoneleigh?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then you are brother to the youth that there are such awkward reports about, at the present time," said Mr. Mason.

"I am, sir," said Allen, with warmth; "I am his brother, and I am proud to say so; for never in this world was there a truer or a better boy. It is false and shameful to say he behaved ill at Mr. Jackson's; wait till I am a man, and see then if any one dare speak against him."

"Well, well, my little man, do not fly at me like a bantam cock going to fight," said Mr. Mason. "I know nothing of the merits of the case; I am no gossip. I am too busy to attend to any affairs but my own, and there is no reason because one brother turns out ill, another should."

"My brother," said Allen, impatiently, and colouring with vexation, "has not turned out ill. I wish everybody was half as good."

"Jackson," observed Mr. Mason, as if to himself, "is a monstrous queer fellow; I have reason to know that well."

Mr. Jackson and Mr. Mason had quarreled.

At this moment a clerk appeared at the door, and said Mr. Mason was wanted immediately; and the architect was quickly leaving the room, when Allen, emboldened by the urgency of his wants, caught hold of his arm, and looking earnestly at him, entreated that he would grant his request.

"I cannot stop to talk any more," said Mr. Mason, moving on.

"One moment," urged Allen, "say I may come."

"You may call to-morrow, if you will," said the architect and he retreated into the office, and shut to the door.

Although Allen would have been better pleased to have entered that morning into a positive engagement with Mr. Mason, he was still very well satisfied with the result of his visit, and he returned home in excellent spirits, and made the younger branches of his family laugh heartily at the humorous account he gave of his own feelings, and of his interview altogether with Mr. Mason. Mr. Gordon knew so well the great difficulty of getting a boy into any good situation without paying a premium, that he was quite willing his son should conclude the bargain he had begun, as it must tend to his improvement, and ultimately, perhaps, lead to some farther advantage. He only stipulated, when giving his consent, that Allen should not engage to work too many hours in the course of the day, as he considered very close application to an employment of the kind injurious to health, besides taking him away too much from his other studies.

When Allen presented himself before Mr. Mason on the following day, he found the good gentleman in something of a more pleasant mood; and Allen was quite contented with the demands made upon his time, in return for what he was to receive.

Allen was not required to be at Mr. Mason's before ten o'clock in the morning; thus he had several hours for other occupations before starting for Stoneleigh. He found the facilities for prosecuting his employment, and the instruction he unavoidably received, of great benefit; and he endeavoured, to the utmost of his power, to do his best during those hours he worked for Mr. Mason.

Mr. Mason was not insensible to Allen's merits, and he encouraged him with words, and once or twice with

some more substantial marks of his favour, in the shape of a few useful implements for drawing ; indeed the boy bid fair to receive all he had bargained for, long before the time of his service was expired.

Mrs. Gordon, who had instructed Allen as well as Osmond in drawing, was highly gratified with the success of her son ; and both his parents rejoiced in the energetic spirit he had displayed in seeking to advance himself in life, and in the good and steady conduct he preserved in order to retain the advantages he had obtained.

When Allen was relating the particulars of his interview with Mr. Mason, he said nothing about the unpleasant remarks the architect had made on Edward, as he, with all his elder brothers, was very careful not to allude to the subject before his parents, fearing to cause them an increase of uneasiness. But when Allen was alone with Edward, he told him what had been said, for he thought his brother might derive satisfaction from hearing the opinion the architect held of his late master ; and he also wished Edward to know how warmly he had spoken in his defence, adding, "that he thought it might do good."

But the zealous boy was mistaken as to the effect he meant to produce on his brother, for part of what Edward heard only served to make him still more unhappy, as it brought fully before him the idea which hitherto only floated vaguely through his mind,—that his reputed misconduct might have an injurious effect upon his brothers in their entrance into life. In the instance of Allen, it had certainly not stood in his way ; but could he venture to hope that it would be so with the rest of his brothers ?

But while Edward felt thus, he kindly thanked Allen for his warm defence of him, and made an effort over him-

self to appear cheerful; indeed, he strove hard, generally, to conceal the sorrow that preyed upon him.

Notwithstanding these praiseworthy efforts on the part of Edward, it was but too evident to the keen eye of parental love, that the poor youth was suffering deeply. Mr. Gordon, confined as he still was, to his room, knew nothing of the reports in circulation against Edward; and attributing his son's dejection to the loss of employment, a loss likely to be deeply felt by one of so active and energetic a character, encouraged him to look forward to soon obtaining another, and perhaps better situation than the one he had held with Mr. Jackson.

As soon as ever he was well enough to set about it, Mr. Gordon said he should exert himself to the utmost in the business. Edward was very sensible of Mr. Gordon's kindness, but he only felt the more how great would be his father's distress when he came to know the whole painful truth.

Mr. Gordon had often spoken of resuming his profession, but was as constantly dissuaded from such a purpose by his wife, who felt sure that the mental exertion that such a step would require would produce fatal effects to one whose life was of inestimable value to his family.

One afternoon, soon after Allen had commenced his employment at Mr. Mason's, Mr. Gordon, who was reading a country newspaper, said, addressing his wife—

"I see the death of Whitmore, of C——, in this paper; you remember Whitmore; he was the first solicitor in his county, a great deal of business will necessarily now pass into other hands; suppose I go and try my fortune there?"

"My dear husband," exclaimed Mrs. Gordon, "do not

for a moment think of anything so rash. It would be the death of you. And why should you wish it? Are we not very happy here? It is true we have not many luxuries, but we have many comforts; all we want is to have you well."

"Believe me, my dear," replied Mr. Gordon, "it is not of myself I think; were I in a good business, I could advance our boys."

"Our boys," replied his wife cheerfully, "will all get on very well; some of them are doing very well already."

At this speech of his mother, Edward, who was sitting by, with a book before him, involuntarily, as it were, looked at his father, and met his eyes fixed on him with an earnest and melancholy gaze. Edward stooped over his book to hide the gathering tears, as he said to himself, "My brothers, I hope and trust, will prosper in life; but as for me, I am like a withered branch in a luxuriant tree. My prospects are blighted for ever!"

Edward rose hastily and left the room, then, snatching his hat, he quitted the house, and entering some adjacent meadows, passed quickly on till he arrived at the little copse that had been the scene of some of his former sorrowful reflections. He sought for the tree he had before sat on, and sinking down on it, he buried his face in his hands, and was soon lost in bitter retrospection. He recalled to mind every incident connected with his late employment, his buoyant feeling, his resolution to do right, and his firm conviction that his conduct would be such as to give unfailing satisfaction to his master.

"How strange it is," exclaimed he to himself, "that with such steadfast purpose to do my duty, things should have turned out as they have!"

His thoughts then reverted to the cause of his misfortune, namely, his entire forgetfulness of the duties of his situation, on his attention being arrested, and his feelings powerfully excited by objects of high interest to himself.

"How certain I was," again exclaimed he, "that I should never do anything to forfeit the situation I was so delighted to have obtained. Yes, I felt sure of myself."

Edward then recalled to mind his adventure with Stephen Dennis, and how nearly that had got him into a scrape, and he considered, as he had done before, whether he had acted in the affair in the wisest manner he could.

"I was in a great rage with the boy," said he to himself. "My feelings were in so elevated a state at my own prospects, that I did not in the least reflect; if I had, I might have reasoned with the boy, or, at any rate, have beaten him less severely. Well, that circumstance all blew over; but it might have served as a warning to me to watch my own conduct a little more."

Again the boy fell into a deep reverie, but his thoughts were assuming an entirely new character. The word "watch" brought to his mind that solemn command.

"Watch and pray."

Edward repeated the words to himself again and again, till at last he exclaimed, "Ah! there it is that I have failed; I now see the cause of my downfall,—I trusted in my own strength. I neglected to call upon Him, without whose strengthening aid the wisest and best resolutions of short-sighted mortals are of no avail. I felt sure of myself when I ought to have acknowledged my own weakness and inability to guide myself aright. I never prayed as I ought, to be kept from going astray; I felt secure in my

own sense of duty, and never doubted but that this was sufficient to keep me from ever doing wrong. I certainly never neglected my prayers,—I should have been unhappy if I had done so; but when I prayed, how did I pray? Never, I fear, as I ought. I have always had too much pride, too much self-reliance; when I should have felt that in the least thing I could not act aright, or even think aright, without God's holy guidance and assistance. I never sufficiently humbled myself; the firm conviction I had of my own fixed principles caused me to rely on my own human strength, without properly considering that I could only preserve myself in the right way by constant prayer, and the entire conviction of my own weakness.

"I set out wrong," continued Edward, pursuing his self-examination; "I ought to have mingled with my natural feelings of joy on the prospect before me, some doubts as to my capability of giving entire satisfaction to a man so rigorous and exacting as Mr. Jackson. Had I done so, I should have sought assistance where strength to continue in the right path alone can be found, and I should have watched carefully every step of my conduct."

Long did Edward remain thus meditating, till at length he rose from the tree on which he had been resting, and plunged into the thickest part of the copse. Here, secure from all fear of interruption, he threw himself on his knees on a moss-grown hillock, and poured out his whole soul in deep and earnest prayer, acknowledging how greatly he had erred, confessing his weakness, and imploring pardon and the Divine aid to rule and guide his future conduct.

Nor was this a solitary instance of repentance and deep humility on the part of Edward; on the contrary, from

this time his devotion took a different turn, and henceforth, when oppressed with the sense of his unhappy situation, instead of endeavouring to reason himself into tranquillity, he sought support and consolation in prayer and the confession of his sins.

Great was the comfort that Edward derived from these religious exercises, and fervently did he resolve never again to take a fresh step in the path of life, however unimportant it might seem, without first imploring upon it God's gracious blessing.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Oftimes nothing profits more
Than self-esteem, grounded on just and right,
Well managed.

MILTON.

Know'st thou not,
That when the searching eye of Heaven is hid
Behind the globe, and lights the lower world,
Then thieves and robbers range abroad unseen!

SHAKESPEARE.

Night—night and darkness! Well do ye beseech
A deed of infamy! 'Tis well to hide
In the dun pall of thick obscurity
What bears a kindred aspect.

W. H. MADDEN.

AMONG those whom Osmond persuaded to sit to him for their portraits was Jarvis's grandson Matthew. The young sailor, with his bright intelligent look, bronzed complexion, ruddy cheeks, and thick black hair, formed no bad subject for the pencil, and Osmond was particularly successful in his likeness of him.

Matthew thought it a very clever performance; and, after showing it to his relations, carried it off for his mas-

ter, Mr. Sawyer, to see ; 'and he was so pleased with it, that he begged to retain it for a few days, to show his friends.

Osmond had portrayed both his sisters and every one of his brothers, down even to Charlie, whom he bribed to sit still by the promise of a handful of marbles and a new pop-gun. He next induced his mother to sit to him, and last of all his father, whose convalescence now permitted him to give his son short sittings. Every one of the family were deeply interested in the success of this portrait, the execution of which, owing to Mr. Gordon's ill-health, had long been delayed. Osmond, by never suffering his subject to get too much fatigued, and by choosing those times when he was least suffering, contrived to throw into the likeness of his father that expression of feeling and goodness which gave an inexpressible charm to Mr. Gordon's countenance.

Osmond had just finished this portrait, and his mother, sisters, and brothers were gathered round it to give their opinion, when Hannah delivered a letter to her master, saying the servant who brought it waited for an answer. Mr. Gordon opened the letter, and as he perused its contents, a smile of satisfaction passed over his countenance. Then handing it to Osmond, he said,—

"Here, young artist, read this letter—read it aloud ; every one will be pleased to hear it."

The letter was from General Ashley, and was as follows :—

"Pinegroves, Thursday Morning.

"DEAR GORDON,—My brother William's regiment is ordered off immediately to India ; before he goes, he wishes to have his daughter's likeness taken to carry with him,

and also to leave his with her. An artist from London, who was engaged to paint these portraits, has disappointed us, and the time is too short to apply to another. A few days ago we saw a portrait of a young sailor at Sawyer's, the carpenter's, which he told us was done by a son of yours. Such a likeness as that would perfectly satisfy my brother. Will you spare your boy to come to us for a few days, and will he oblige us, in a case of emergency, by exerting his skill in favour of a father and daughter, who are so soon to be parted for years. If you accede to our wishes, Mr. Howard, who is coming here to-morrow morning on a professional visit, will drive the young artist over in his chaise. I would have proffered my request in person, if a kick from a vicious horse did not detain me at home for the present.

"Yours most truly,

"CHARLES ASHLEY."

"What answer am I to send; shall it be yes or no?" said Mr. Gordon gaily to his son, as Osmond, well pleased, yet with a half-perplexed look, stood still studying the letter, after having read it twice through.

"Say yes, by all means," cried Osmond; "I shall be delighted to go; and yet," continued he, looking anxiously at his father, "if I should fail in making good likenesses, will not General Ashley be sorry he asked me?"

"Not, I think," replied his father, "if you strive to do your best."

"At any rate," said Mrs. Gordon, "he ought to go; it would be very disobliging to refuse."

"I should like it above all things," exclaimed Osmond, "if I thought I should succeed. It would be so pleasant

to be with General Ashley ; Helen and Trevor have said so much in his praise."

"He looked so kind and good-tempered," said Helen, "that I am sure, Osmond, you need not be in the least afraid of him."

"I doubt," replied Osmond, "that I shall feel very differently when I am drawing so important a personage as General Ashley's brother, from what I did when I was making a likeness, for my own amusement, of humble Matthew Jarvis. And then the young lady too! I fear I shall lose all confidence in my own powers before such subjects."

"You must not let over-anxiety to do well," said his mother, "defeat the end you have in view."

"I will try not," replied Osmond ; "but I wish you or papa were going with me, to advise and give me confidence."

"Have confidence in yourself," said Allen ; "a man has always to make his own way in the world."

"I know that," answered Osmond ; "but I feel so desirous to please General Ashley that it makes me timid."

"A modest manner, dear Osmond, is no disadvantage," said Mrs. Gordon, "if you do not allow your diffidence to interfere so as to prevent your doing yourself justice."

"Well, I think I may answer in the affirmative," said Mr. Gordon ; and turning to his desk, he wrote an acceptance for Osmond of General Ashley's proposal.

It was long before Osmond fell asleep that night ; mixed feelings of pleasure and anxiety kept him wakeful. It undoubtedly was a great event in the life of one so young, the being thus called upon to exercise his talent. He dreaded a failure ; but should he succeed, inexperienced

as he was in the ways of the world, he could not but be aware it might be very advantageous to him. General Ashley was a man of wealth and consequence in the county, and Osmond felt that if he chose, he could give him introductions of very great value to a portrait-painter.

It was the first great epoch in Osmond's life, and he felt it in all its force to be such. His desire to succeed was intense; and he hoped that no indiscretion or wrong conduct, on his part, would interfere to mar his prospects; and as the best safeguard against such a misfortune, he betook himself to earnest prayer. Fervently, and with his whole heart and soul, did he pray for guidance from above, and implore that his Father in heaven would have him in his holy keeping, directing his steps aright, and preserving him from all the temptations that might assail him in a position of life so entirely new to him.

To a family so united as the Gordons, the pleasure of one was the pleasure of all; consequently, there was no small excitement when so important an event as Osmond's going to Pinegroves was in view, and in the morning a consultation was held in the sleeping-apartment of the Gallery on the subject of Osmond's clothes—his best suit.

Frank had risen earlier than usual to brush them, and Osmond brushed them himself; still, though clean, they had the appearance of having seen much service. Osmond was getting too big for a jacket, but as money was not forthcoming to purchase a coat, he was obliged still to wear the jacket, which he had a good deal outgrown. In vain he pulled at the sleeves; they would not reach to his wrists.

"Turn back your wristbands, they are very white," said

Helen, who had arrived to bring a little present for her brother ; "there, that looks very well indeed ! And now tie this handkerchief round your neck ; it is pretty, but much fitter for a boy than a girl."

"And here are a pair of gloves for you," said Trevor ; "I have only worn them once or twice, and they are as good as new."

The worst part of Osmond's appointment was his hat. Allen offered the loan of his new one, a recent purchase, chosen "economically too large," as the boy expressed it, intending that it should last a year, and that "his head should grow to it."

But though too large for Allen, it was too small for Osmond ; and notwithstanding the owner gave it two or three thumps as it rested on the head of his brother, it would not go on.

"I should wear it tipped on so," said Allen ; "it looks genius-like. If I drew heads as well as you, I should affect to dress like a genius."

"I cannot affect to be anything I am not," replied Osmond ; not perceiving, in the earnestness of his own feelings, that his brother was joking.

"It is a good hat," said Frank.

"Yes," said Osmond, putting his hands to his head to make another attempt to get it on ; "and I think it really would fit me, if Helen would be so good as to cut away a handful or two of hair." And, with his usual impetuosity, when he had decided what to have done, he bid his sister hasten away for the scissors.

Helen hesitated, and Mrs. Gordon coming in at the moment, put a stop to this operation, and after giving a kind glance at Osmond, whose gentlemanly air and bear-

ing she, with a mother's love, thought made full amends for the poorness of his attire, carried off the party to morning devotions, and then to breakfast.

Osmond was to be at Stoneleigh at half-past eight, and having collected his drawing materials, he set off, carrying a small carpet-bag and a stout overcoat on his arm.

This coat was nearly new, being a present of Edward's, bought with a portion of his salary, when in the employ of Mr. Jackson.

Osmond found Mr. Howard just ready to start, and placing his bag and drawing apparatus in the chaise, he jumped in.

Mr. Howard drove a capital horse, and Osmond enjoyed his drive very much, feeling in the rapid motion that exhilaration of spirits which is commonly experienced when passing quickly through the air. He looked at the trees, some of them still bright in their autumnal foliage, as he was whirled past them, and then at the distant country fading in a purple haze along the horizon, and thought that this world, notwithstanding its cares and its sorrows, had a great deal that was pleasant in it. And then he looked at the piles of majestic clouds tipped with white, rising like mountains into the blue sky, and reflected what would become of man without God's gracious care and protection of him.

In a little less than an hour, Mr. Howard dashed through the lodge-gate at Pinegroves, crossed the park, and reined up his horse before the handsome residence of General Ashley.

Mr. Howard went immediately to attend upon his patient, the general, and his companion was shown into the breakfast-room, where a party of ladies and gentlemen

were sitting round a table making their morning repast, at the same time reading letters and papers, or chatting and laughing in a lively manner.

The colour mounted to Osmond's cheeks, and he felt slightly embarrassed on being thus ushered in among a number of strangers without any introduction. Immediately on Mrs. Ashley's perceiving him, she held out her hand to him, saying, at the same time—

"The young artist, I presume," and in an obliging manner she seated him beside her, and offered him some breakfast.

Osmond, who, though modest, was not bashful, instantly became perfectly at his ease; and his drive through the bracing morning air having given him an appetite, he enjoyed a second breakfast of chicken and tongue very much. As he sipped his coffee, his eyes wandered round the table to discover, if he could, those whom he was invited to portray; and he felt a wish that a girl of about twelve years old, with a remarkably good-tempered expression of countenance, who was seated opposite to him, might be one of his subjects.

This hope was soon realized, for when breakfast was ended, a fine-looking man, whom he guessed by the likeness to be the young lady's father, rose, and said—

"Come, Lucy, we must not lose any more time. I see our young friend," looking towards Osmond, "is ready, so we will adjourn to the room your uncle has appointed for our studio."

So saying, Major Ashley, for the gentleman was the general's brother, led the way to a pleasant room properly arranged for taking likenesses. When the shutters, which were now partially closed, were open, the room commanded

a view of the park and gardens, and adjoining it was a comfortable sleeping-apartment.

"We shall hope for as much of your company as you can give us, when not occupied with your pencil," said Major Ashley, in a pleasant manner to Osmond; "but when you wish for retirement, these rooms are for your sole use." He then, first having expressed his obligation to Osmond for so readily acceding to his wish, repeating again the urgency of the case, arranged with his daughter that she should take her first sitting that morning, as he had letters to write.

He then left the room, saying to Osmond, "I must come and take a look at the position you place your subject in; after that, I shall not interfere in your occupation. You will not mind, I suppose, our coming in and out, for we are all lovers of the arts here."

Osmond replied that he was accustomed to draw with many people about him, and that the presence of any one who chose to be by would be no interruption to him.

Lucy Ashley was a sensible girl, and did not perplex the young artist by any foolish fidgeting, or constant rising up and down, to place herself in the most becoming attitude.

As she seated herself in the model's chair, she drew a flower from a vase close by, to inhale its perfume, and with this in her hand, she fell at once into an attitude so natural, that Osmond fixed her in it, and by the time Major Ashley returned, he had made a rough sketch of his daughter.

Osmond said he should be happy to try any other position Major Ashley might suggest, but the major said he thought no other would be better, and the young artist pursued his work with vigour.

After a time, Osmond encouraged Lucy to talk, wishing to catch an animated expression of her countenance, for every now and then, as she looked at her father, who was writing at the far end of the room, her features assumed a very pensive cast.

Osmond inquired of Lucy if she was fond of drawing.

"Very," she replied; "but I do not think I have had good instruction. The master at my school, I am of opinion, does not know a great deal of the art, and he is not at much pains to teach his pupils even the little he does know. I learn a great deal more now I am here, by looking at the paintings in the picture-gallery."

"Is there a picture-gallery here?" inquired Osmond, eagerly.

"A very fine one," replied Lucy; "have you never seen it?"

"No," replied Osmond; "will you show it me by-and-by?"

"Certainly," said Lucy; "but you would enjoy looking at the paintings more if my uncle was by, he is such an admirable judge."

"Is he?" said Osmond, anxiously; "how shall I ever be able to please him?"

"He is very good-natured," said Lucy, "and always finds something to praise in the works of young artists. What a pity it is that he is confined to his room, and cannot look on at us now!"

Osmond said, and with perfect sincerity, that he was very sorry for General Ashley's accident; but had his absence been caused in a way not painful to him, the boy would undoubtedly have been very glad of it, for he felt fearful that his powers of execution would have been embarrassed by so experienced a connoisseur looking on.

When the bell rung for luncheon, Major Ashley, who possessed the same kind and considerate feelings as his brother, bid Osmond put his drawing on one side, saying he would not request to look at it till it was further advanced, knowing how troublesome premature opinions often are to artists, even when they are more experienced than the youth before him, who was so diligently exerting himself in his favour.

After luncheon, Lucy went out to walk with her father, and Osmond passed the time of her absence in the picture-gallery.

It would be hard to describe the effect produced on a young enthusiast in the art, like Osmond, by a first introduction to a collection of paintings such as he now beheld. He wandered entranced from one *chef-d'œuvre* to another in a perfect ecstasy of delight, scarcely knowing which to prefer, till at last he stopped before one of Vandyke's portraits, and remained stationary for at least half an hour, studying the tender shades and matchless colouring of that unrivalled master.

Osmond felt the great advantage to his own work to be derived from the contemplation of such excellence, and when Miss Ashley returned to give him another hour's sitting before dinner, he resumed his occupation with an improved eye, and greater refinement of taste.

The next day Osmond did not continue his portrait of Lucy, for her father sat to him instead. Major Ashley, being very much occupied, took his sittings when he could best find time, so that the young artist's work was varied, and perhaps with no detriment to it.

Osmond made frequent visits to the picture-gallery, and always with advantage; indeed, he derived so much

pleasure and (he trusted) improvement from what he saw, that when not engaged with his sitters, he would have spent there every moment of his time, had he not been frequently invited to walk or drive out with Mrs. Ashley and the party in the house.

Osmond went occasionally to sit with General Ashley in his room, and the boy was so charmed with his host's conversation, and pleasant, cheerful manners, that, notwithstanding the awe in which Osmond stood of the general's artistic criticism, he was very glad when that gentleman was well enough to join his friends at dinner.

Every day now brought fresh visitors from the neighbourhood, and occasionally some gentlemen arrived from London; among the latter was a Mr. Seymour, who took a great deal of notice of Osmond, and whom he and Lucy declared, during one of their morning sittings, to be almost the kindest and most entertaining man they had ever met with.

There was always a great deal of amusing and instructive conversation at dinner, and in the evening; and very frequently there was music, so that Osmond's time passed most pleasantly.

Very shortly after his arrival at Pinegroves, Osmond asked Miss Ashley to show him her drawings. He found that they evinced both taste and feeling for the art; but it was very evident that she had been badly instructed. He offered to give her a few lessons during his stay, saying, modestly, that besides having learned of his mother, he had had the advantage of being taught for a short time by a good London artist, and he should be very happy to tell her what he had himself learned.

Lucy gladly accepted this offer, and proved an apt

scholar. Both her father and uncle were very much pleased with the progress she made; the major especially, as drawing was an accomplishment he was very desirous his daughter should excel in.

When the portraits were finished to the best of Osmond's power, he showed them first to Lucy when he was alone with her.

Lucy exclaimed with delight at her father's likeness, and said it would be a treasure to her when she was separated from her dear parent. She made one or two trifling observations, such as the hair being a little too much off the forehead, and the chin a very little too long, and Osmond willingly agreeing to make these slight alterations, she bounded off in search of her father, to ask him to give the young artist a few minutes more of his time.

Major Ashley, being at leisure at the moment, attended the summons, and the portrait having received its finishing touches, was, with the one of Lucy, submitted to his inspection.

Both portraits received Major Ashley's warm commendation; he said, as far as he could judge of a representation of himself, he thought Osmond's likeness very good, but he could speak unhesitatingly of his daughter's, and he pronounced it to be admirable.

"It is my little Lucy herself!" exclaimed he. "I do not wish for a better likeness of my child; her expression is most truly rendered, and that is by far the most essential part of a portrait."

Osmond was highly gratified by the result of his labours; and he had the farther satisfaction of finding that the general and Mrs. Ashley were as well pleased with the portraits as the major and Lucy were.

General Ashley, whose opinion as regarded works of art was very valuable, told Osmond that these two last portraits were much better executed than the one he had previously seen, meaning that of Matthew Jarvis.

Osmond replied that he was aware of the improvement himself, and that he attributed it to his frequent visits to the picture-gallery.

"It is a great advantage, no doubt," said General Ashley, "to study the best works of the old masters, and you show so praiseworthy a desire to get on in your art, that I shall be very happy to have you stay here another week or two, to profit by any hints you can gain in my picture-gallery."

The ardent boy was delighted with this obliging offer, and immediately determined to make a careful copy of the Vandyke that pleased him best.

As he was expressing his thanks to his kind host, Lucy came to tell him that Major Ashley wanted to speak to him in the studio, before her father made his arrangements for quitting Pinegroves that afternoon.

"I am very much indebted to you, my young friend," said Major Ashley, when Osmond entered the studio, "for the pleasure and happiness you have conferred on my daughter and me, and as the obligation must not be all on one side, you must accept a token of my regard. I have with me a few volumes of history and travels, that I intended to have presented you with, but Lucy tells me you intend practising portrait painting professionally, and that being the case, I think it probable you may chance to like this better than books;" and the major, as he spoke, placed ten sovereigns before Osmond.

Osmond was taken perfectly by surprise, but in a moment or two recovering himself, he said—

"It is of importance to me, circumstanced as my father is, to gain my own living as soon as I can; I will, therefore, not altogether refuse your kindness; but one sovereign each I consider ample payment for the portraits, and that I will take, and no more.

"You must not," said Major Ashley, "pain me by refusing what I offer; I consider the portraits, as works of art, are worth that money; as faithful representations of the originals, they merit even more;" and seeing Osmond taking up two sovereigns, and pushing the rest from him, he added, "If your modesty causes you to estimate your performances at so low a value, you must consider that I am much in debt for the valuable instruction you have given my little girl."

"Oh yes, papa," said Lucy, eagerly, "Osmond has given me excellent lessons; he has taught me how to proceed in order to make my buildings upright, the tumble-down condition of which always annoyed you and my uncle so much; and he has instructed me in the different proportions of the human figure and face; all of which I knew nothing of before; besides showing me how to mix my colours, and how to lay them on."

"I am most happy," said Osmond, "to have been of service to any one of a family who have shown me so much kindness, and as to the portraits, the artist, of whom I learned, advised me to begin with asking a low price."

"That which I offer you is by no means high," said Major Ashley; and he continued so good-naturedly to insist on the young artist taking the ten sovereigns, that Osmond at last consented, thinking that most probably it was a real gratification to a man like Major Ashley to do a generous action.

Lucy was well pleased that her young friend accepted her father's gift, and producing a purse, said, as she held it up—

“Look here; this is the purse, the colours of which you advised me about; I made haste to finish it, that it might be ready to receive your money.”

Osmond thanked Lucy for her present, saying he should value it both for its beauty, and for being her obliging gift; and he thought, as she counted the sovereigns into the purse, money never before had so pleasant a sound.

Major Ashley was to leave Pinegroves that afternoon, and all the family purposed accompanying him to the station on his way to London.

The father and daughter were very sorrowful at parting with each other, and the general and his lady were both much depressed at losing their amiable relative.

Osmond felt very sorry too, and he stood on the doorstep to watch the carriage as long as it was in sight, hoping to get another wave of the hand from the kind-hearted and generous soldier.

As General Ashley was getting into the carriage, Osmond said it was his intention to walk home that afternoon to see his family, and that he would be back in the morning to avail himself of the kind invitation he had received to study in the picture-gallery.

General Ashley said it was getting late, and that Osmond had better wait till the morning, when he expected Mr. Howard to make him a farewell visit, and that his young friend could return to Stoneleigh with him.

As soon as the party had driven off, Osmond retired to his own room to think over what had passed, and, it

must be confessed, to count over and over again the ten sovereigns he had received. He seemed hardly able to realize the certainty of his being in the possession of such a sum of money; and as he gazed at it with feelings of real delight, he thought of the exquisite pleasure it would be to him to tell all the dear ones at home of his success.

"How they will all congratulate me," said he to himself; "and how astonished they will all be!"

And then he considered why he should defer such enjoyment to the morrow. His heart burned to rejoin his family, of whom in his happiest hours he had often thought; and when General Ashley invited him to prolong his stay, he determined to go home for at least a few hours, and see them all, and tell of all he had seen and done.

Myrtle Cottage was just nine miles from Pinegroves. Osmond looked at the clock, and saw that there was but one more hour's daylight. "But what then!" exclaimed he to himself; I do not mind walking in the dark. I will go, I am resolved; General Ashley did not desire me not, he only advised. Ah! he does not know what a spur it is to have money of one's own earning for the first time in one's pocket, neither does he know what a stout walker I am."

So saying, Osmond started up, and buttoning his treasure tight up in his pocket, he ran down stairs. In crossing the hall, he encountered one of the servants, with whom he left a message for General and Mrs. Ashley, saying he was going to walk home, but that he should be back in the morning."

The servant to whom Osmond spoke was a man who had lived long in the general's service; and not thinking the plan a wise one, he took the liberty of remonstrating

with the young gentleman on the imprudence of setting out at so late an hour in the day, at the commencement of the winter season, to perform a walk of nine miles, the chief part of it on a lonely road.

"I am not in the least afraid, thank you, Thomas," said Osmond, and bidding the careful servant good evening, he sped along the park till he arrived at the lodge gate. Here he encountered fresh remonstrances; for, on accidentally letting fall to the lodge-keeper, with whom he was a favourite, that he was on his way home, the man tried to dissuade him from his purpose; saying that the way was lonely, and that there had been some ill-looking fellows lately lurking about the neighbourhood.

But Osmond had made up his mind to go home; so assuring the good man at the lodge there was not the slightest occasion for fear, he hastened forward, and made such good use of his time, that he accomplished the first four miles of his journey before the last few streaks of daylight had faded in the west. The next mile or two were enlivened by cottages scattered here and there along the road, from whose windows gleamed every now and then the ruddy glow of the fire that burned within; and before he reached the loneliest part of his road, a crescent moon had risen and shed her pale beams on his path. On he went, up hill and down hill, over a wild heath, and beside a lonely wood, thinking of nothing but the pleasure he was going to give and receive, when suddenly springing out from a hedgerow beside him, a man seized him by the collar, and presenting a pistol, fiercely demanded his money or his life.

Osmond was a brave youth; and though the odds seemed fearfully against him, he considered if there was no way of effecting his escape, and saving his treasure.

The man saw in a moment the sort of person he had to deal with, and said,—

“Give me your money quietly, and I will let you go without injury; but if you attempt to struggle or call out, a bullet shall pass through your head.”

Notwithstanding this threat, Osmond made a dexterous movement, and jerking himself away from the robber's clutch, sprang forward; but he had hardly made a step onwards, when he felt his heels tripped up, and he came with violence to the ground. His assailant kneeling on his chest, rifled his pockets with one hand, while with the other he held the muzzle of his pistol pointed against Osmond's face, declaring at the same time, with half-smothered oaths, that if the boy made the least noise or resistance, he would blow his brains out.

Osmond felt the purse of sovereigns wrenched from his pocket, and the next moment he was relieved from the pressure of the man's weight; and in the full expectation of instantly receiving a blow to stun him, and prevent his following his assailant, he was surprised to hear the sound of fast-retreating footsteps. Osmond concluded that the robber had been alarmed by a real, or fancied noise, and had fled.

Greatly relieved to have escaped personal injury, the boy rose and walked on, and after he had proceeded about a quarter of a mile, he met with a policeman, to whom he told his tale. Osmond then pursued his way, and reached home without farther adventure. But how sadly changed were his feelings: the pride and joy of meeting his family had vanished; his money was gone, and in its place he had a tale to tell of want of judgment and of giving way to impetuous feelings.

He stopped at the entrance to the house ; a cheerful light gleamed through the curtains, and sweet sounds of music issued from the room where he knew the dear inmates of his home were assembled. His hand was on the bell to ring ; but, disappointed and mortified he turned aside, and entering the garden, sat down on a rustic bench, where, after a time, his full heart found relief in a burst of tears.

Presently he dried his eyes, and calling up his courage, quitted the garden, and announced his arrival at home by a gentle pull at the bell. Hannah opened the door ; but at the sound of his voice there was a rush of his sisters and brothers from the drawing-room, and his return home was welcomed by kind embraces and exclamations of joy and surprise.

Osmond found the family all well, and his father rather better, and for a few moments he forgot everything but the happiness of the meeting ; but he was quickly recalled to painful recollection. The appearance of his dress, torn and dirtied, soon excited the wonder of some of the children, and their exclamations of,

"What has happened ? what has been the matter ?" soon elicited from the discomfited youth the history of his unfortunate adventure, which was listened to by all with thrilling interest, and expressions of heartfelt gratitude at his narrow escape from death or serious injury.

"I never shall get over my vexation and disappointment !" passionately exclaimed Osmond, when he had ended his narrative. "My money," continued he, looking round on his anxious group of listeners, "was all for you. I laid it all out, in imagination, in useful presents as I walked along. I had fixed on everything I intended to

buy, and then that villain to rob me! I almost wish I had run after him and tried to get my money back!"

"That, I think, my dear boy," said his father, "would have shown as little wisdom as the first part of the affair."

"Oh, dear papa!" exclaimed Osmond; "it is all my own folly that has caused my misfortune, and that makes the matter ten times worse. Why, why did I not wait till to-morrow, as the general and the servants advised me!"

"You wanted so to please us all," said Helen; "your impatience was very natural."

"I think, my dear Osmond," said his mother, "that when your first feelings of vexation are a little subsided, you will be of opinion that you have cause to be most thankful that you escaped injury at the hands of the robber. Think of what you might have suffered, and of the misery we might all have been involved in, and you will become reconciled to so comparatively small a misfortune."

Osmond felt the truth of his mother's observation; and checking his lamentations, he told of the purse Lucy had given him, and described to Helen the colours and arrangement of the silks, of which it was made, together with his initials "worked on it all in gold."

He then tried to amuse his family by histories of all he had seen and done at Pinegroves; and told how kind the general and all the family had been to him, and what a number of pleasant persons he had met with during his visit, and how delightfully his time had passed.

Still, every now and then he broke forth into renewed bursts of sorrow at his loss, and exclamations of regret at

the want of prudence on his part which had caused it. All the family felt truly sorry for him, and offered him the best consolation they could.

When Osmond was about to retire for the night, his father detained him for a few minutes to speak to him. Taking his son kindly by the hand, Mr. Gordon said,—

“You have had a providential escape, my dear boy, which calls for our heart-felt gratitude to that merciful Being who watches over us, and protects us in our hours of danger. I think I need not remind you of your duty to offer up to God your deep and sincere thanks for his mercy to you.”

“Oh! papa,” eagerly interrupted Osmond, “I have already done so, and shall do so again and again. I stopped more than once, on my way home, to return my most humble thanks to God for his merciful preservation of me in a time of great peril, as I now, more than at the moment, feel assured it was.”

“I am persuaded, my dear boy,” said Mr. Gordon, “of your feelings of gratitude. Would that I could think that this event might make a durable impression on your mind, and that you might henceforth act with more prudence and better judgment. You have had a painful lesson in your first onset in life, for it is a grievous disappointment to you the loss of your money; but I should consider ten times the amount well spent, if it would teach you a little caution and reflection.”

“Indeed, papa,” said Osmond, “I really will endeavour not to act so much upon impulse. For the future, when I have made up my mind to do a thing, I will stop, and first ask myself whether what I have determined upon is right and wise.”

"If you will but do so, my dear," said Mr. Gordon, "it will be your safeguard against rash and foolish actions; but do not trust to your own unaided efforts; ask for assistance from that source from whence true wisdom alone proceeds. Ask with faith, and rest assured that help in the time of need will not fail to come."

CHAPTER XXV.

And yet he hailed the morning . . . with a light heart, and sprang from his bed with an elasticity of spirit which is happily the lot of young persons, or the world would never be stocked with old ones.—DICKENS.

Oh, how this tyrant Doubt torments my breast!

DEYDEN.

On the morning following Osmond's return home, it required considerable ingenuity on the part of Helen, aided by Hannah, to repair and restore to a tolerably good appearance the clothes worn by her brother on the preceding evening. But industry and a good will accomplished the task; and Osmond, soothed and in some measure consoled by the kindness and sympathy of his family, set out, directly after breakfast, on a second visit to Pinegroves.

Mr. Howard willingly consented to give the boy a seat in his carriage; but as the servant drove, while the medical man was deeply engrossed in reading a new publication, Osmond, in the back seat of the chaise, had nothing to disturb his meditation; and after thinking how new a world had been opened to him, and what strange events had taken place since he first passed along that road on his way to Pinegroves, he made many good resolutions to watch more carefully over his conduct, and to strive to

act so as not to cause his kind parents regret and mortification.

Immediately on his arrival, Osmond, after collecting his drawing-materials, went into the picture-gallery, and in close attention to his work, endeavoured to make some amends for his folly, and strove to dissipate the unpleasant recollections attendant upon it. He drew diligently till dinner-time, not feeling either inclination or appetite to make his appearance at luncheon.

Lucy and Mrs. Ashley were out, and the general engaged on business, so that his absence was not remarked. At dinner there was a pleasant party; and, seated next Mr. Seymour, Osmond lost for a time the remembrance of his trouble. The following morning he was up early at his employment, which consisted in making, as far as he was able, a faithful copy of one of Vandyke's portraits.

After breakfast he resumed his work, and was sitting in the long silent gallery, striving hard to drive away the painful recollection of his loss, and confine his thoughts solely to what he was engaged upon, when he heard a door behind him softly opened, and on turning, perceived thrust through the crack a purse—his own purse; that which Lucy Ashley had given him; at the same instant he heard a merry laugh, and the next his brother Allen, throwing open the door, rushed up to him, crying out,—

“It is all safe; your money is safe at home!”

“Is it possible?” exclaimed Osmond; “how can such a piece of good fortune have happened? You are not joking surely? No,” continued he, eagerly examining the purse; “this is really and truly Lucy Ashley’s present. But I can hardly believe what I see and hear, for joy.”

So delighted was Osmond at this unexpected recovery

of his treasure, that it was some time before he could listen to the means by which it had been restored to him.

When Osmond was sufficiently calm to attend, Allen told him, that as he was returning home from Mr. Mason's on the preceding evening, a notice in the window at the post-office caught his eye, stating that on describing the make, and mentioning the contents of the purse, it should be restored to its owner, on application to Mr. Pullen, glazier, at Stoneleigh.

Allen said, that though he felt but little hope that the purse was his brother's, he went straight to the glazier's, where he found that Pullen was not only fully acquainted with Osmond's loss, but had assisted in capturing the thief.

It appeared that, not satisfied with the booty he had already obtained, the man who attacked Osmond waited to waylay some one else; and the next person who chanced to come up was Pullen. The glazier had been unexpectedly detained late at a house where he had been on business, and had nearly reached the spot where Osmond had been robbed, when the same man rushed out upon him, demanding in like manner "his life or his money." But this time the thief had no easy customer to deal with, for Pullen was a strong, powerful man, and resolutely rushing at once on his assailant, he disarmed him; and at that minute a policeman coming up, the same to whom Osmond had told his tale, the robber was secured, and lodged in a place of confinement.

On being searched, two purses were found on the man; and this occasioned the notice to be posted up, that had attracted Allen's eye. Pullen said the policeman had repeated Osmond's story, and he felt so certain that the

purse marked O. G. belonged to the young gentleman, that if he had not been detained on business, he should have walked over with it to Myrtle Cottage, and that he intended, on his return home that evening, to send a note desiring Osmond to call and claim his property, as soon as he conveniently could.

Allen described the purse to Pullen in the same manner that he had heard it done by Osmond to Helen, and saying that his brother was gone back to Pinegroves, the glazier handed the purse over to Allen, who said he would take it to Osmond on the following morning.

Allen further informed his brother, that though it was too late to set his mind at rest the same evening, he had asked for and obtained leave to bring Osmond the joyful news early the next morning.

At first Mr. Gordon was unwilling to give his consent, thinking a walk of eighteen miles too much for a boy of Allen's age, besides the risk he ran of being benighted before he could again reach home. But on the lad's telling his father that Mr. Mercer, the haberdasher, was going to Pinegroves in his light cart on the morrow, and would drive him there, Mr. Gordon made no further objection.

Osmond having thanked his brother many times for his good nature in hastening to him with such delightful news, and being now tolerably well composed, Allen produced a drawing, which he said he had no heart to show on the evening of Osmond's disaster. It was a design for a town-hall, which he had at leisure times been busily engaged upon for several weeks, and which he had looked forward with much pleasure to exhibiting to his brother, whose praise and sympathy in his pursuits were very valuable to Allen.

The two brothers were deeply engaged, the one in approving, and the other in explaining all about this drawing, when General Ashley, accompanied by Mr. Seymour, entered the picture-gallery.

"My brother," said Osmond, as the general looked at the young stranger; and he then mentioned the cause of Allen's visit.

General Ashley congratulated Osmond on the recovery of his property, at the same time he appreciated the boy's delicacy in not having before mentioned his loss.

Osmond had been withheld from doing so by thinking that if he was told of it, the general, who was both rich and generous, would be inclined to make him some amends; and this he felt he neither desired nor deserved.

During Osmond's narration, which he interspersed with sundry remarks on his own impetuoussness and impatience, which, to say the least of them, were very candid, Mr. Seymour had been examining Allen's drawing, and when Osmond ceased speaking, he inquired by whom it was done, and for what purpose the building was intended.

Allen replied that it was his drawing, and that he had been induced to try his powers of design on that kind of edifice, from hearing that a new town-hall was about to be erected in —shire; and then perceiving that Mr. Seymour appeared to take some interest in his attempt, he proceeded to explain the ground-plan.

"You have two ground-plans, I see," said Mr. Seymour; "but one is much better than the other."

"It is," replied Allen; "the best is an improvement on mine by my master, I was about to say so, and to point out the difference."

"Why did you tell me your master helped you?" asked Mr. Seymour; "if you had kept your own counsel, and said nothing about help, I should have called you a very clever young fellow!"

"Why did I tell you?" repeated Allen with surprise; and in a moment he added, "it would be no pleasure to me to receive praise I did not deserve; besides, it would not have been the truth, to let you suppose the whole of the design was my own."

Mr. Seymour looked again at the drawing, and then asked Allen who was his master; and on the boy replying that he was working at present under Mr. Mason, of Stoneleigh, Mr. Seymour exclaimed—

"The cross-grained old fellow. What, is he your master?"

"Mr. Mason is a just man," said Allen, gravely.

"Be that as it may, you do not wish to remain with him always, I dare say," said Mr. Seymour; "you have doubtless, like most other youths, visions in your head of going to London, and making your fortune?"

"I do certainly hope to get to London some day," replied Allen.

"London," said Mr. Seymour, "is not the paradise, nor the highway to fame and fortune, some people imagine it; there are trials and difficulties there as elsewhere."

"I should not care for the trials and the difficulties," said Allen; "I would fight up against them, if I could but get on in my profession."

"That is a right spirit, my lad," exclaimed Mr. Seymour; "but would it hold good upon trial? I expect that you know but little at present of the troubles of life."

"Mine, certainly," replied Allen, "have hitherto been only boyish ones; but—"

"But what?" said Mr. Seymour.

"But my father says," continued Allen, "that bearing well the crosses and disappointments of our youthful days is the best preparation we can have for meeting with firmness those greater trials which will come upon us in after-life."

As Allen said this, a time-piece in the picture-gallery struck the hour of twelve, when starting up, he said—

"I must be off directly."

"No, no," said General Ashley; "you must not go, you must stay the day with us; do, and I will send you back to-morrow."

Allen politely, but firmly, refused; saying he must return home that afternoon.

"You cannot think how well you will be amused if you remain here," said Mr. Seymour. "I am sure you can have no urgent reason for returning."

"Papa, desired me," said Allen, "to set off home at twelve o'clock, and I promised I would do so."

"Papa would be very angry, I suppose," said Mr. Seymour, "if you did not do as you were bid."

"I should be very angry with myself," said Allen, "if I were disobedient."

"Never mind for once, just once," said Mr. Seymour; "you have not seen all these beautiful paintings, and there are more below; I thought such a sight would have delighted a young artist like you. Here, look at this fine cathedral," continued he, pointing to a splendid painting opposite, "and then at this palace, they are master-pieces of the art."

"I cannot look at them," said Allen, resolutely turning away, and snatching up his drawing, and hastily shaking Osmond by the hand, he bowed to the other gentlemen, and ran out of the picture-gallery.

General Ashley followed the boy down stairs, to offer him refreshment before commencing his long walk, but Allen would not stop to take any.

"I will show you a short cut across the park," said General Ashley, reaching his hat; "it will save you ten minutes' walk at least. I am sorry I cannot send you home; but the men and horses are all out different ways at present. It is a long walk for you."

Allen thanked the general for his consideration, but said, as he had ridden to Pinegroves, he should not dislike the walk back.

As they proceeded, General Ashley commended Allen for obeying his father's order, and the boy replied that, had it been right, he should very much have liked to remain, for it would have been a greater treat than he had ever yet had, the seeing the fine collection of paintings, of which, besides the glimpse he had obtained that morning, his brother had spoken of in the greatest admiration.

"It is a pleasure you deserve to have," said General Ashley, "and you may ask my friend Gordon to allow you to come here to-morrow, and stop a day or two with me; the pony-carriage is going to take a guest of mine to Stoneleigh in the afternoon, and you can return in it."

Allen was delighted at this proposal, and said he was sure his father would consent, adding that there was nothing particular for him to do just then at Mr. Mason's.

"You have another brother," said General Ashley, "younger than you, I think, whom I once met: a noble

little fellow, fond of gardening, who parted with his highly-prized hand-glasses for the benefit of some poor people in distress. I have often thought of that boy, and meant to have sought him out, but business or occupation of one sort or other has always hitherto prevented my doing so."

"You must mean my brother Trevor," said Allen.

"Trevor is his name, is it?" said the general; "well, then, tell Trevor he must come with you to-morrow; I wish to make his further acquaintance. And now here we are at the park-gate, and I will bid you good day."

Allen returned home from Pinegroves in due time, highly pleased with the result of his visit. He had made Osmond very happy by the good news he had brought him, he was delighted with the invitation he himself had received to go again, and it was no small part of his satisfaction, the thought of how rejoiced Trevor would be to hear that General Ashley had invited him also. As soon, therefore, as Allen had related to his parents all that had passed during his visit to Pinegroves, he set off eagerly in search of his brother.

Allen found Trevor busily at work in the garden, making the most of the declining daylight. He was putting into pots some geraniums, which had adorned a flower-bed during the summer, and which, now the cold weather was coming on, he wanted to have in the house to enliven the rooms, and please his mother and Helen.

Contrary to all expectation, Trevor did not seem at all so delighted as Allen expected with General Ashley's invitation, and with all the commendation that had been bestowed upon him. He certainly suspended his work to listen to what was said, and he looked very red in the face; but as he did not at the same time appear pleased,

Allen attributed his brother's heightened colour to having stooped over the flower-pots. Allen was quite puzzled and slightly mortified at his good news being received with so much indifference, and, determined to rouse his brother out of such an unaccountable fit of apathy, he began a description of the beautiful park, the splendid mansion, its halls and picture-gallery; increasing in warmth as he proceeded, till, as a climax, he told of the magnificent conservatories and green-houses, by which he had passed as the general led him through the gardens on his road home. But it was all in vain; Trevor would not be in the least excited, nor would he express the slightest wish to see any of these glories of Pinegroves. He kept on working hard at his geraniums; so hard indeed, that Allen thought he would certainly break some of the pots as he knocked the mould down with his spade.

But the feelings excited in Trevor by what he had just heard were anything but those of indifference, and the moment Allen left him, Trevor flew to find Helen, and to her he opened his heart on a subject of deep interest to himself.

It has been related that Trevor was very much delighted with General Ashley, when he met with him on his memorable visit to Pullen. The noble figure, the mild yet intellectual expression of countenance, together with the frank and gentlemanly manners of the gallant soldier, had captivated the boyish fancy of Trevor. There was a something of romance, too, attached to the history of some of General Ashley's campaigns, and anecdotes were related of him how, when in the midst of victory, he had shown pity and forbearance of no common kind; and now that he had retired, crowned with well-earned laurels, he was

cultivating the arts of peace, and pursuing the life of a country gentleman in a way that conferred dignity on himself and happiness on all around.

To be noticed and approved of by such a man would have been the height of Trevor's ambition; but associated with General Ashley were some unpleasant feelings in the breast of his young admirer.

"If," said he to Helen, when with a beating heart he had related to her all that Allen had told him,—“if General Ashley had merely invited me to go, without any comment upon my conduct, I might have gone; as it is, I cannot. He asks me, because he thinks me a ‘noble fellow.’ O Helen! I have paid dearly for my selfish vanity in taking to myself the merit of an action in which I had so little share. General Ashley did not know the truth; if he had, instead of noble, he would have called me mean and cold-hearted.”

“But you were very good, dear Trevor” said Helen, “in parting with your glasses; it was a generous action.”

“If I did part with them,” said Trevor, “who was it that made me? It was you; but for you, I should have done no act of kindness for the Jarvises.”

“Still you did do it,” said Helen, in a kind tone of voice, for she saw her brother was painfully excited; “and you may accept General Ashley's invitation with perfect propriety.”

“No, no!” exclaimed Trevor, “I cannot; indeed I cannot.”

“It would be such a pleasure to you,” urged Helen, “to see such a beautiful place as Pinegroves, and to walk in the park and gardens, and above all, to look at the general's choice collection of flowers. I am told his conservatories are the finest in the country.”

"Allen says they are far larger than any Flower has," replied Trevor.

"What a pity it is you do not go," said Helen.

"I should have been delighted to go, for I have often and often wished to see the conservatories at Pinegroves; but above all, I should have been so pleased to see General Ashley, if—if I had not been guilty of such meanness."

"You blame yourself too much, dear Trevor, indeed you do," said Helen, striving to console her brother. "Do go."

"Helen," said Trevor, resolutely, "I will not go; you forget what sort of a person General Ashley is, you forget his exalted character. I could not look that man in the face, and feel I was suffering him to deceive himself by thinking highly of me when I do not deserve it."

"Mamma often says you have a very tender conscience," said Helen, "and it is a proof of it, that you are now so anxious not to have more praise than you consider you deserve. But it is a long while ago since the affair of our hand-glasses, and since that time, what pains you have taken, Trevor, to conquer any little faults you had, and now who is more kind and generous than you!"

"I would give you anything I have, or all the world if I had it, my kind sister," exclaimed Trevor, looking affectionately at Helen.

"And you would do the same," replied his sister, "for anyone else who needed your kindness."

"I would for papa and mamma, and my brothers and Fanny, certainly," said Trevor.

"And not for them only."

"Do you think so?" anxiously asked Trevor.

"I am sure of it," said Helen.

"I detest a selfish character, and I hope I am not one now."

After a few minutes' silence, during which the boy appeared to be thinking deeply, he went on; "I very often reflect upon my own character, and try to understand it, and I think—shall I tell you, Helen, what I think?"

"Do," said his sister; "I should like to know, especially as I think it an excellent thing to strive to obtain self-knowledge."

"Yes," replied Trevor, "it is so; but in my case, just now at least, I fear it looks like thinking too favourably of myself, and that made me hesitate about telling you."

"You need not be afraid to tell me, dear; speak out," said Helen.

"Well then," replied Trevor, "I love very strongly, and I like very strongly; I often think much more so than a great many people do; and I have frequently thought that it was being so much attached to everything about me, that made it so painful to part with what belonged to me; and that caused me to be considered selfish."

"Perhaps so," said Helen; "at any rate, it might be so in some cases. You are exceedingly warm-hearted; but you will, I am sure, agree with me, that when we have a fault to cure ourselves of, we must not view it with too indulgent an eye; we must bear to see it ugly, as it really is."

"I wish to judge myself justly," said Trevor.

"That I am certain you do," replied his sister; "and in the present case you are far too severe upon yourself;

and I am convinced, if General Ashley knew what pains you take to be amiable, he would like you to go and see him, even if you had shown ten times the unwillingness you did at first to make a sacrifice of your own pleasure. Take my advice, and go."

"You mean very kindly, dear Helen; but what you have just said does not at all alter my resolution," replied Trevor, who, young as he was, had good reasoning powers; "I have been invited to Pinegroves because General Ashley considered I had done a noble action, in which idea he was wrong; he knows nothing of my character or conduct since."

"Suppose," said Helen, who was very desirous her brother should not lose so much pleasure, "you were to tell the general, when you get to Pinegroves, exactly how the case stood. He would still be pleased with you, I am sure, for giving way at last."

Trevor reflected for a moment, and then said—"And what would General Ashley think of me, for taking to myself all the praise he bestowed upon an action in which I bore so small a part?"

"I do not know what more I can say," replied Helen; "I wish you would talk to mamma, she would at once advise you to do what is best and right; she is going out this evening, but you can talk to her in the morning."

At this moment Fanny came to tell Helen she was wanted, and the conference between the brother and sister was broken up.

As soon as Allen quitted the garden, leaving Trevor to the undisturbed amusement of his flower-pots, which he seemed to think interested his brother much more than anything he had to tell, or even the invitation which he

had brought him from Pinegroves, he went to his drawing, and passed all the time he could spare, during the remainder of the day, in finishing another of his designs, to carry with him on the morrow to show Osmond. In the morning he was up early for the same purpose, and had achieved what he wanted, taken a hasty breakfast, and was at Mr. Mason's by nine o'clock.

Before leaving the house, he called to Trevor to join him at the architect's punctually at three o'clock, at which hour he told him General Ashley had said the pony-carriage should be there, to convey them both to Pinegroves.

Allen was desirous to be at work in his master's office an hour earlier than usual, as he was going to absent himself for a day or two; and though the boy was still giving his assistance for the implements he was to receive in return, he considered it his duty to be as punctual in his attendance as if Mr. Mason had engaged him at a regular salary. Allen had called for a moment, on his way home the day before, to state the reason of his non-attendance that morning, and to mention the invitation he had received to Pinegroves, and Mr. Mason had thrown no impediments in the way of the youth's pleasure.

When the hour of departure arrived, Allen began to look impatiently for Trevor; the pony-carriage was at the door, and still his brother did not appear. He ran to look out, and see if he was coming up the street, when he perceived, not Trevor, but Frank, hastening towards him with a letter in his hand.

"What!" exclaimed Allen, "is Trevor not coming?"

Frank made a sign of silence, and drawing his brother aside, said, lowering his voice, and in a manner that

showed his feelings were interested in his mission, "Trevor sends this letter for you to deliver to General Ashley, but he will not go; he cannot get over that business of the hand-glasses."

"Poor fellow!" said Allen, "is that it? I could not make out what was the matter last night. But it is a great pity he does not go; I shall not enjoy my visit half so much without him."

Allen spoke truly, and during the greater part of his drive to Pinegroves, his thoughts were occupied with regret that his absent brother would not share his pleasure.

As to the object of his meditations, Trevor had been left to decide for himself whether he should refuse or accept General Ashley's invitation. Mrs. Gordon had remained all night with the sick friend she had been called to, and had sent word she could not return home till late in the afternoon, and Mr. Gordon was close shut up all day with a gentleman on business. So with no one to control or advise him, except his constant confidant and counsellor, Helen, Trevor determined to abide by his first resolution, and decline an invitation which, under other circumstances, he would have been delighted to accept.

Trevor reflected that if he did not go to Pinegroves, he ought to write; so, after some little trouble, he composed a letter, in which he stated, much in the same manner as he had done to Helen, his reasons for declining General Ashley's invitation; at the same time he expressed his thanks to that gentleman for his kind thought of him, and wound up his letter by a few artless expressions of the admiration with which the general's character had inspired him.

It was too late that day for Allen to see the picture-

gallery, so he sat chatting with Osmond in his room till dinner-time. The brothers talked over poor Trevor's business, and then Osmond, after mentioning what guests were in the house, regretted, especially on Allen's account, that Mr. Seymour was away.

"He was obliged to go to town," said Osmond, "yesterday afternoon, but he promised to be back to-morrow."

"I cannot say that, as far as I am concerned, I am sorry for his absence," said Allen.

"Indeed!" exclaimed Osmond; "Mr. Seymour is a delightful companion, and General Ashley has a great regard for him."

"I thought," said Allen, "that he tried to make me swerve from my duty; and I am not quite sure that I liked the manner in which he talked to me. At any rate, he had no occasion to call my master cross-grained. I dare say, Mr. Mason never did him any harm."

"No; but he did not behave kindly to a youth, a relation of Mr. Seymour's wife, who was once studying under Mr. Mason for a short time. He was so cross and impatient, that the lad would not stay with him. Mr. Seymour told me this after you were gone away yesterday morning."

"I do think," said Allen, laughing, "that Mr. Mason's is not the sweetest temper in the world."

"It surprises me," said Osmond, "that, so quick and shrewd as you generally are, you did not perceive that Mr. Seymour was not serious with you. I thought you would have seen the droll twinkle of his eye, when he said you should not have told him you had been helped in your design."

"I suppose," replied Allen, "that I was so anxious about returning home in time, that I could only see what was straight before me."

"And as to trying to make you stay beyond your time," said Osmond, "Mr. Seymour told me that he was interested to see how firmly you would resist temptation."

"He was amusing himself, I suppose, by measuring his powers of persuasion against mine of resistance," said Allen.

"I do not know if Mr. Seymour was amused," said Osmond, in his usual straightforward manner, "but he seemed to approve of you very much, and asked me many questions about you, and a few concerning our family generally, but not at all impertinently."

"Mr. Seymour is a great deal here, is he not?" inquired Allen.

"Just at present he is," replied his brother, "for he has business in the neighbourhood. Mr. Seymour is a civil engineer. General Ashley and he were schoolfellows, and the general estimates his friend very highly, not only on account of his talents, but as to character; and he is very glad to have him stay at Pinegroves whenever business calls him this way."

"Has Mr. Seymour any children?" asked Allen.

"He has one daughter, married; and he says he keeps on with his employment more for the love of it, and for the sake of having something to do, than from the wish of deriving a profit from it. But there is the first dinner-bell; we had better now go into the drawing-room."

The boys passed a very pleasant evening, for there was a great deal of interesting and improving conversation going on, which they enjoyed listening to; besides which

some of the company were kind enough to talk to them. The next morning they were up early, and paid a visit to the picture-gallery, with which Allen was as much delighted as Osmond had been.

After breakfast, General Ashley was going to send some ladies to Stoneleigh, and when the servant came to announce that the carriage was ready, he desired him, when he had set the ladies down at the station, to go on with the carriage to Myrtle Cottage.

"You will deliver this note," continued General Ashley, "and wait for an answer;" then turning to Osmond and Allen, he said, smiling good-naturedly—

"I cannot let your brother off; he has refused my invitation, but he must come and see me;" then, a few moments after, he added, "He must be a very superior boy, your brother Trevor, to have judged himself as he has done, and to have written to me in such a candid manner concerning the errors of his conduct."

CHAPTER XXVI.

How could my tongue
 Take pleasure and be lavish in thy praise!
 How could I speak thy nobleness of nature,
 * * * * *
 And in-born truth, unknowing to dissemble.

Rowe.

By nature blest
 With the rich tokens that she loves the best;
 * * * * *

A brow unfurrowed by a frown;
 The untaught smile that speaks so passing plain,
 A world all hope, a past without a stain.

Holmes.

TREVOR was sitting reading to Helen in a little room upstairs that looked on to the road, when General Ashley's smart carriage and beautiful gray horses, so admired on a former day, drew up to the door of Myrtle Cottage. The boy had striven hard to confine his attention to his book, but thoughts of his brothers enjoying themselves at Pinegroves, and visions of picture-galleries, parks, and gardens, and, above all, conservatories filled with the resplendent beauty of tropical regions, would, notwithstanding, fill his mind; and when the gay equipage and spirited horses came in view, he seemed to think that they were only a part of the day-dream in which his imagination had been for some time wandering.

But his dreams were speedily put to flight by a most agreeable reality in the shape of a letter, which Frank came running up to him with.

"The servant waits for an answer," cried Frank.

With eager haste Trevor opened the letter, which contained a few obliging lines from General Ashley, telling Trevor that he still considered him a "noble boy," and

begging him to return in the carriage that morning to Pinegroves, where he would receive a cordial welcome.

The delighted boy handed the letter to Helen, and then ran in search of his mother, to whom he communicated his joyful news, and asked permission to accept the invitation.

Mrs. Gordon, who had been made acquainted with all that had previously passed on the subject of Trevor's having been invited, and his having refused to go to Pinegroves, rejoiced for her child at this pleasant termination of the business, and hastened to assist in preparing him for his visit.

Helen was highly pleased for her brother, and so was Frank, who had been the bearer to Allen of Trevor's letter refusing the general's invitation.

It did not take Trevor long to equip himself, and he was soon seated in General Ashley's carriage, which bore him swiftly along. He could hardly believe that he was really and truly going to such a charming place as Pinegroves, and to visit a gentleman of whom he had constantly thought with the greatest admiration. He kept thinking what he should say to General Ashley when he arrived, and wondered if the general would really be glad to see him, as he had said in his letter, and whether he would take any notice of him more than saying, "how do you do?" and then that he should go off with Osmond and Allen.

The boy was in a state of great excitement, and seated himself first in one part of the luxurious carriage, and then in another, and then he stood up and tried to see the gray horses as they trotted along. At last the lodge came in sight, and then appeared the beautiful park, through

which he had passed about half-way, when voices hailed the coachman, and the carriage stopped. Trevor looked out, and was well pleased to behold the friendly faces of his brothers. Osmond and Allen supposed, rightly, that Trevor would be very glad of their company in making his first appearance before General Ashley, and had come to meet him.

Trevor jumped out of the carriage, and the three brothers walked across the park to the mansion. Osmond and Allen said General Ashley was in the picture-gallery, and with beating heart Trevor accompanied his brothers there; but if he felt shy and strange on first entering, these feelings were immediately banished by the kind and cordial manner in which General Ashley welcomed him to Pinegroves. There was a party of ladies and gentlemen viewing the pictures, notwithstanding which, the general led Trevor up to some of the paintings most calculated to interest a boy of his age; and he related two or three anecdotes connected either with the paintings themselves, or with the artists who had executed them, in a very obliging manner. Among the pictures to which Trevor's attention was directed, was one of a naval engagement, in which one of England's bravest admirals lost his life. The scene was most faithfully depicted, and Trevor gazed long and attentively at it. He had read at home the life of the hero, and the boy ventured to ask General Ashley some questions that the sight of the painting gave rise to. The general answered him very kindly, and entered into several details of the engagement with which Trevor was not acquainted, but which he listened to with great interest.

Osmond and Allen drew near, and they were soon

joined by Mr. Seymour. The party moved on to other pictures, and General Ashley and Mr. Seymour alternately entertained the juvenile group with histories and anecdotes. Both gentlemen had been a good deal on the continent, and their conversation was full of instruction and amusement.

The boys were encouraged to talk, and to give their opinion of the paintings, which they did in a modest manner; and the elder boys especially evinced, by their observations, both taste and judgment.

Delighted as Trevor was with seeing the paintings, and by General Ashley's winning manner and conversation, still he could not help feeling some anxiety as to whether he should see the conservatories and green-houses that morning. He was not a little pleased, therefore, when, on coming to a painting of flowers, the general said, addressing him—

“By the bye, my little brother florist, I must take you to see my plants before the day gets too far advanced;” and, leading the way, he speedily introduced his young guest to those regions of enchantment he had so longed to behold.

What a display of dazzling colours, what beauty and variety of form met Trevor's delighted gaze. He was quite at a loss where first to fix his attention, or what most to admire.

At last, drawing a long breath, and exclaiming, “How beautiful!” he set himself regularly to work to view, in due order, the varied and interesting collection of plants before him.

General Ashley, who was gratified to be the means of giving so much pleasure, was a good deal surprised at the

knowledge displayed by Trevor, who not only knew the names, but the country from which most of these floral treasures came, together with their peculiarities and the sort of culture they required. In one or two instances the boy seemed acquainted with a few particulars respecting some of the plants, of which the general himself was ignorant.

Trevor had gained his knowledge, partially from flower shows, to which he had now and then been ; and from books, choice works, into which he had been fortunate enough to get peeps. He was a genuine lover of flowers and plants, and had been so from very early childhood ; and, as is always the case where there is a favourite subject, had improved every opportunity of gaining information upon it.

He and the obliging owner of the rare collection now before him had much amusing conversation, and they seemed to like each other the better for the taste they had in common.

The boy lingered in these fascinating regions till the declining day warned him how late it was, when he reluctantly accompanied the general back to the house. Here he was in some measure consoled by the sight of some valuable horticultural works, which were laid before him by his companion.

After a time, dinner came, and during the evening there was so much to interest and amuse, that when Trevor retired for the night he thought that he had never before spent so delightful a day.

The time passed equally agreeable with the other boys. Osmond had been engaged part of the morning with his drawing, and he got acquainted with a gentleman, who

was not only an excellent artist himself, but had visited all the first picture-galleries abroad; and he entered into several interesting discussions with Osmond on the subject of paintings and painters. Mr. Seymour talked a great deal to Allen, and drew the boy out to converse with him. Allen thought that Mr. Seymour, besides being very entertaining, showed a great deal of kindness of heart and right feeling in his discourse; and he told Osmond, when they were together in their room at night, that he thought Mr. Seymour merited all the praise that his brother had bestowed upon him, and even more.

The following morning, when Allen was sitting beside his brother, who was at work in the picture-gallery, Mr. Seymour came in, and drawing up a chair, placed himself near the brothers, and began to talk to them. He asked Allen if he had any more designs to show, and the boy brought forward the one he had lately finished for Osmond's inspection.

Mr. Seymour, having carefully examined the design, said it was better than the other, both as to originality of conception and beauty of construction.

"You must love your business, I think," said Mr. Seymour, as he still held in his hand, and from time to time looked at Allen's design; "you could not do so if you did not."

"I do love it with all my heart," replied the boy; "and I hope I shall one day excel in it. There is no harm in hoping," added he, laughing.

"I wish," said Mr. Seymour, looking steadily at Allen, "I had you in my office. You should do something great there, or I am much mistaken."

Allen's eyes sparkled with pleasure at the bare idea of such promotion.

"I had rather," continued Mr. Seymour, "have a boy like you without a premium, than a dull youth, whom it would be a labour to teach, however large the sum might be that I should receive with him. Money I do not want, but talent I do. Will you come and live with me, Allen, and be my pupil?"

"Above all things I should like it," exclaimed the boy.

"A pupil I have with me now," said Mr. Seymour, "is going to leave me; in a month his time will be up, and you shall supply his place, if you will. You are a clever boy, Allen; and, as far as I can judge, you are well conducted and have good principles. I must have a well-disposed lad with me; I could not suffer any other. You, I think, will suit me; and if you will do your part, I will do mine."

Allen, who was delighted with Mr. Seymour's proposal, said he would do all in his power, by diligence and good behaviour, to give Mr. Seymour satisfaction.

"You are full young," continued Mr. Seymour, "to apply yourself exclusively to a profession; you must have an hour or two daily for other studies, and you shall attend a school close by my house, the master of which is my friend. Shall you like that?"

Allen replied that he should be most thankful for such an opportunity of improving himself.

"Now, you will remember," said Mr. Seymour, "that if you come to me, I charge myself entirely with you. You are to be no farther expense to your parents; I shall pay myself out of your labours. But do not be alarmed, you will not find me a very hard task-master; and then there is my wife, she will be by to take your part if I ill-

use you," continued he, smiling. "I must not, however, let her spoil you."

Allen could not help thinking it would be a long time before he could repay Mr. Seymour for all he would do for him, and he warmly thanked that gentleman for his most kind and generous intentions towards him.

Allen, with Trevor, was to return home that day, and it was settled before they went that Mr. Seymour should call the following morning at Myrtle Cottage, and speak to Mr. Gordon respecting the proposal he had made to Allen,—to become his pupil, and to live with him in London.

Mr. Seymour was true to his appointment, arriving early the next morning.

He brought with him a letter of introduction from General Ashley, which contained a high eulogium on his friend's character. General Ashley said he had known Mr. Seymour long and intimately, and that he was highly conscientious and right-principled, and altogether a man with whom anxious parents might feel perfectly satisfied to place a son.

It will readily be supposed that such an advantageous proposal as the one made by Mr. Seymour was most joyfully accepted by Allen's parents. The only difficulty Mr. Gordon found was, that the terms were far too favourable for him; and he for some time objected to Mr. Seymour's being charged with the sole expense of the boy's maintenance and education.

As to education, independent of professional instruction, Mr. Seymour begged Mr. Gordon to feel quite easy on the subject; for the master of the school he proposed sending Allen to was his friend, and he and Mr. Seymour

were in the habit of exchanging mutual assistance. And as regarded the still more weighty affair of the boy's being no farther charge to his parents, Mr. Seymour declared the advantage was on his side. It was for his interest, he said, to train up some one who would at a future day take the business off his hands, and pay him a share of the profits.

"It is absolutely necessary," continued he, "to have a clever, conscientious lad for such a purpose; and a lad such as I want, Allen is. At the same time I would not wish to tie the boy down to me. If at any time he has the opportunity of doing better, he shall be at perfect liberty to leave me."

The business being thus happily arranged, and the time fixed for Allen's departure, Mr. Seymour took a kind leave of Mr. and Mrs. Gordon, making them additionally happy by his parting words, namely, that their son's religious duties should be carefully attended to, and that he should be kept from all ill-disposed companions, and never suffered to mix in improper society.

Allen thought his prospects very bright, and he was delighted at the idea of relieving his parents from the burden of his maintenance. Osmond, before his brother left Pinegroves, pressed upon him the acceptance of five sovereigns, to fit himself out in clothes in case he was to go to London, of which he entertained little doubt.

Allen felt very grateful to his brother for his considerate thought of him, but said he would not consent to take the money, except as a loan, and with this condition Osmond was obliged to rest satisfied.

Osmond was still to remain a few days longer at Pinegroves to complete his work. On the last even-

ing of his stay there was a large party, and among the company were Sir Henry and Lady Amy Arundel and their daughter. The portrait of Major Ashley, which the general had got handsomely framed for Lucy, was exhibited to the guests, and was very generally approved of. Among its warmest admirers was Lady Amy, who, having a peculiar weakness for seeing herself portrayed in every possible manner, immediately thought she should like to have herself "done in young Gordon's style."

Accordingly, before going away, she spoke to Osmond on the subject, and he most willingly agreed to comply with Lady Amy's request, that he would come over to the "Castle" on the next day but one, and take her likeness.

This was a fine opening for the young painter, for Lady Amy led the fashion in her immediate neighbourhood, and it was probable that if Osmond succeeded well in his likeness of her, others might be inclined to follow her example, and be painted likewise.

Osmond had passed his time so happily, and had experienced so much kindness from General Ashley and his lady, that he quitted Pinegroves with regret, and was much pleased at receiving an invitation to repeat his visit at some future time.

But although Osmond was sorry to leave those who had shown him so much kindness, he was delighted to be again with his family, and it was also most delightful to tell of his farther success in his art, namely, the being desired by Lady Amy Arundel to take her likeness. After two days spent most happily in the society of his family, and in the closest interchange of thoughts and

feeling with his beloved companion Edward, the youthful artist set off again on a second visit among strangers.

Osmond's first entrance into life had been attended with so much that was pleasant, that he was hardly prepared for the contrast "the Castle" offered in many respects to Pinegroves. But the boy was too well aware of what a chequered scene life presents, and how frequently what is disagreeable will arise, to be much disconcerted by the difference.

Lady Amy Arundel and her daughter were stiff and cold towards him, and the elder lady gave him a great deal of trouble, first, by frequently changing the attitude in which she would be drawn, and then by insisting on constant alterations in the painting, much, as Osmond thought, to the injury of the likeness.

There was no company staying in the house, except an infirm lady and a deaf old gentleman. There were no pleasant persons to talk to; indeed, Osmond seldom heard any conversation at all, except after dinner, when Sir Henry enlightened the boy with his political views, which, though Osmond did his best to understand, appeared to him so confused, that he never could make out which Sir Henry considered the right or the wrong side of a question, and in despair he came to the conclusion that he was too young to understand politics—at least, Sir Henry Arundel's politics.

But there was a good library, to which Osmond had access, and, when not engaged with his pencil, he amused himself very well with the books he found there.

In process of time, notwithstanding the impediments thrown in his way, Osmond finished Lady Amy's portrait, and, contrary to his hopes, it gave great satisfaction; so

much so, indeed, that the young artist was employed to take the likeness of Miss Arundel. This lady was a better sitter and a pleasanter subject to paint than her mother, and Osmond was very fortunate in his likeness.

When Osmond had finished this second portrait, Lady Amy Arundel questioned him as to his charges, and asked what Major Ashley had paid him.

The boy replied that Major Ashley had been very liberal towards him, and had given him far more than he either desired or his works merited, and he named the sum, candidly stating, at the same time, he had not intended to charge more than a sovereign for each portrait.

Lady Amy Arundel was one of those persons who would, without hesitation, lavishly expend money on articles of dress or fashionable baubles; while, for works of real taste, such as require refinement of mind to appreciate and understand, she would drive a hard bargain, and strive to obtain at the lowest possible price. It was no consequence to her that an artist spent his days, and often his nights, in close and laborious study,—that his energies were exhausted and his health injured in attaining excellence in a most difficult art; all she thought of was how to get things done cheapest.

These being her views on an art which charms, and ought to have the warmest support and encouragement from the wealthy, it is not surprising that she considered the sum last named by Osmond ample remuneration for the modest young artist who stood before her; and she would have tendered him a sovereign for each of the portraits, if Sir Henry had not happened to come in just at the time the lady started the subject of payment.

Sir Henry had rather more feeling for the art than his lady, and pronounced the likenesses to be very good, and

worth three guineas each; and Lady Amy not wishing that the Ashleys, who, by the way, were no favourites of hers, should think her deficient in liberality, finally agreed to pay Osmond that sum.

The day Osmond left the Castle there was a large party of the neighbouring gentry at dinner, and Lady Amy Arundel exhibited her own and her daughter's portraits, praising their execution highly, and talking a great deal of the "young artist,—a mere boy," by whom they were done, and whom she was labouring to assist and bring into notice. The consequence was, that several of the company were eager to patronize Lady Amy's *protégé*, and they determined to send to him to have their likenesses taken.

Osmond from this time got into constant occupation, charging three guineas each for his portraits; and in process of time he realized a sufficient sum to enable him to go to London, and study under the best masters and in the first schools of painting.

Osmond's genius was of that aspiring kind which would never rest satisfied by mediocrity in the art he loved; besides he took the proper way that ultimately leads to fame and fortune.

But we are anticipating the history of Osmond. On the boy's return from the Castle with his six guineas in his pocket, he hastened to his mother and father, and begged them immediately to expend the money in the purchase of whatever appeared most desirable, or was most wanted in the family; and he was considerably disappointed when his father told him, that, except in purchases for himself, every shilling of his money would be put by for his own use.

Mr. Gordon said he had done the same with Edward's earnings; and all that was yielded to Osmond's earnest

entreaties, was permission to make Helen a present of a warm winter dress.

Osmond thought the greatest part of the pleasure of earning money was to be able to assist and make presents to his family; and after a time, when sitters became more frequent, his generous nature was allowed a freer scope; and as he got on still more in his profession, he talked of one day or other paying for some of his little brothers being sent to school.

CHAPTER XXVII

Oh! the suspense, the fearful, acute suspense, of standing idly by while the life of one we dearly love is trembling in the balance! Oh! the racking thoughts that crowd upon the mind, and make the heart beat violently, and the breath come thick, by the force of the images they conjure up before it; the desperate anxiety *to be doing something* to relieve the pain, or lessen the danger, which we have no power to alleviate: the sinking of soul and spirit, which the sad remembrance of our helplessness produces; what tortures can equal these; what reflections or endeavours can, in the full tide and fever of the time, allay them!—CHARLES DICKENS.

WHILE Osmond was thus actively engaged abroad, Edward was not less occupied at home, though the nature of his employment was very different.

Soon after Allen's departure for London, and while Osmond was away on some of his artistic excursions, a fever broke out among the children at Myrtle Cottage, attacking them all, with the exception of Edward and Helen. At first the disease did not assume the bad character it did afterwards. Those who first fell under its influence rallied tolerably soon; but Frank and one or two, whom it attacked later, suffered severely, and for a long time

Frank's life was despaired of. This sore affliction was a heavy trial to both parents, but especially to the mother, on whom the chief nursing and care of the sick children devolved, Mr. Gordon being incapacitated from giving much assistance by the indifferent state of his own health.

During this long visitation, Edward's conduct was of the most exemplary kind. He often sat up with the children at night, and waited on them with the utmost kindness and untiring patience during the day. This youth never appeared to think of himself,—his thoughts seemed wholly occupied in efforts to alleviate the suffering of the little ones, to spare his mother fatigue as much as it was possible, and to cheer and comfort her and Helen by words of love and encouragement.

In after-days Mrs. Gordon often declared, that if it had not been for the self-denying conduct and active, energetic assistance of her boy Edward, she must have sunk under the great exertion and heavy affliction of these trying days.

Edward, too, occasionally recalled to mind this time, and thanked God from his heart, that though it had pleased Him to send a heavy trial upon him in his own blighted prospects, an ample opportunity had been afforded him of being useful at home.

All the children were pretty well recovered before a favourable turn took place in Frank's disorder, and after he was pronounced out of danger, he remained for some weeks helpless as an infant. During the first stage of the poor child's recovery he was cross and irritable; but his brother never relaxed in his assiduous care of him, moving him from his bed to his chair, and then carrying him down stairs with the utmost tenderness, and

placing him on a sofa, devoted his time to find amusements that would lessen the irksomeness of the little boy's situation. As Frank got better, he would listen for hours to music, and when Helen or Mrs. Gordon were too much occupied to play to him, Edward would bring his concertina, and with sweet airs often soothe the child to sleep.

With returning strength Frank recovered his accustomed sweetness of temper, and often asked Edward to forgive his having been cross; and he would throw his arms round his brother's neck, and thank him with tears in his eyes, for all his goodness to him, and wonder how it happened that he ever could have spoken impatiently to one who was so exceedingly kind to him.

During his convalescence, Frank often asked for his books, which, after a time, were yielded to his earnest entreaties. This boy had a decided turn for languages, and just before his illness he had taken a great fancy to learn Italian, often stealing away, during his play-hours, to devote himself to the study of that language.

"What do you think I have been meditating upon?" said he one day to Edward, as his brother entered the room after a short absence; "I have been thinking, that till you are ready to have me as clerk in your office, I will be a teacher of languages."

Poor Edward sighed as he thought his brother's would be a poor prospect in life if he waited till he was in a situation to bring him forward.

"My illness," continued Frank, "has been a great deal more expense to papa and mamma than they can well afford, and I am determined, as soon as ever I am recovered, to do something to support myself, and strive to make them amends for all the care and trouble they have had with me. Do you not think I can teach?"

Edward looked anxiously at his brother, whose cheeks were flushed with excitement, and said, "If you wish to make papa and mamma happy, you must take care of your health, and not think of much at present besides trying to get well. I must take these books away now," and he made an effort to remove a grammar Frank held in his hand.

The boy resisted, and on Edward looking grave he exclaimed—

"Do not look so, and I will do as you bid me; I should be most ungrateful to vex you; you who have been so very good to me. But," continued he, changing his tone, "it was you who took so much pains in teaching me to speak and write German correctly; do tell me if you think I can teach, for I have been settling in my own mind that I will go directly I am able to Stoneleigh, to the schools and other places, and find out if a German teacher is not wanted."

Edward made his brother easy by saying that if it depended upon a right knowledge of the language, he certainly was capable of teaching German.

The conversation was here interrupted by the entrance of Mr. Howard.

"Books, books," said that gentleman, shaking his head, as he took the little boy's feverish hand in his; "you will never get well, my young friend, if your mind is so excited; put away these, Edward," continued the medical man, sweeping away a whole host of grammars and dictionaries from the sofa, as he seated himself beside his patient.

"I am much better to-day," said Frank; "and it makes me worse to be idle."

"My brother," said Edward, "is just now full of a new

project, and that has flushed his face. I think else, he really is better."

"And what is this project?" asked Mr. Howard.

"I am going to teach German," said Frank, in a resolute tone of voice.

Mr. Howard kindly stroked the burning cheek of his little patient, and said,—

"I wish you could be sent to Germany, or elsewhere, to get up your strength. You would soon recover then, and might teach German, or employ your mind in any way you like."

"I wish," said Mrs. Gordon, who had entered the room to hear the opinion of the medical man, "that were possible. Change of air, I know, is the best thing for my poor boy; but—"

She did not finish the sentence, and turned aside to brush away the tears that the wasted form and delicate appearance of her child brought rushing to her eyes.

"You must get him out as much as you can into the open air," said Mr. Howard, as he rose and left the room; then, a moment after, he opened the door, and putting in his head, called out good-humouredly,

"Mind, Edward, you burn all the books in the house."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

He was among the prime in worth ;

* * * * *
Well born, well bred ; I sent him forth,
Ingenuous, innocent, and bold.

WORDSWORTH.

NEXT to Frank, the greatest sufferer from the malady that attacked the young people at Myrtle Cottage was Trevor, who remained for long a time much debilitated. He was very patient and gentle throughout his illness, and frequently expressed his thankfulness for all the kind care and tenderness that was bestowed upon him ; and as soon as he found himself recovering, he often begged his mother, Edward, and Helen, not to fatigue themselves so much by waiting on him, and saying his little brothers needed attention more than he did. It was painful to one of so affectionate a nature as Trevor's, to see those whom he so dearly loved looking worn and ill by constant care and exertion ; and as soon as he had strength enough to go up and down stairs, he insisted upon being allowed to share in the business of watching and attending to those who were more ill than himself.

So zealous was he in the cause, that it was sometimes difficult to keep him from making himself ill again by his exertions ; and Helen thought herself very fortunate in finding among her father's books some botanical works, which she entreated, and her mother insisted, on the invalid's occupying himself with during a part of the day.

The books luckily amused the boy, which rendered the duty of obedience more easy.

Trevor was seated in the breakfast-room alone, with his books, one afternoon, when, to his surprise and

delight, General Ashley walked in. He said that he was just returned to Pinegroves, after rather a long absence, and having heard of the illness of the young people at the villa, he had come to make inquiries about them.

It so happened that no part of the family except Trevor were able at that time to see the general, so he sat and talked for half an hour with his young friend alone. Trevor's admiration for this gentleman was increased by his late visit to Pinegroves, and in listening to his conversation, and in answering his questions respecting the health of himself and the rest of the family, the boy fancied himself quite well. Not so General Ashley, for he seemed struck with Trevor's altered appearance, and proposed his coming to Pinegroves for change of air, and told him to go and ask his parents if they would give their consent to the plan.

Trevor hastened away delighted, and soon returned with permission, gladly granted, for him to accept General Ashley's kind invitation.

"I shall be able to find something of this sort to amuse you," said the general, laying his hand on Trevor's botanical work, as he rose to depart; "and the carriage shall be here to-morrow at two o'clock, to convey you to my house."

It was a very great comfort to Mrs. Gordon to have one of her sick children taken away for a change, and Trevor, under the friendly roof of General Ashley, daily improved in health and strength.

Trevor remained a month at Pinegroves, and during that time a warm attachment grew up between the boy and his noble friend.

Trevor never, if he could help it, left the general's

side, sitting by him when he wrote or read, listening to his conversation, and watching the expression of his countenance when he was talking to others, and following him in all his visits to the gardens, and his walks in the park. At the same time, the boy was never obtrusive, as he immediately retired if he thought he was in the way. Mrs. Ashley, too, became very fond of Trevor, and she was often amused by observing his devoted attachment to, and artless admiration of her husband. As to the general himself, he was beginning to love the boy as if he were his own son. He had frequently watched his conduct, and admired the openness and integrity of his character, his hatred of every kind of falsehood and deceit, and the perfect candour of his nature. But what, perhaps, more than anything else, endeared Trevor to him, was his affectionate and confiding disposition; and the warm attachment of his little friend was most grateful to him.

On the last morning of Trevor's stay at Pinegroves, after accompanying his host on a farewell visit to the conservatories, and the floral beauties they contained, he seated himself on a garden chair, and remained for some time entirely silent, with his eyes fixed on the ground.

"Well, Trevor," said General Ashley, who had been for some time attentively regarding the boy, "what are you thinking of?"

Trevor looked up, and blushed slightly; still, he answered with perfect openness, and replied—

"I was thinking what a happy man you must be!"

"To be possessed," said General Ashley, smiling kindly on the boy, "of so much that wealth can purchase? But riches, my little friend, do not give happiness; I want to be loved."

"To be loved!" exclaimed Trevor, with surprise; "why, everybody loves you. I am sure I do;" and he rose, and taking the general's hand, pressed it tight within both his own, repeating what he had said.

"You tell me," said General Ashley, "that your father is poor. I consider him a far richer man than I am." Trevor looked earnestly at his companion.

"I would give up," said the general, fervently, "my splendid mansion yonder, my park, and my gardens, and retire gladly upon two or three hundred a year, to have one child—only one—to love me!"

Trevor was moved with his friend's manner, and clinging to his arm, while he looked up affectionately in his face, said—

"If I had not my own, I should like you to be my father."

General Ashley made no reply, but calling to one of the gardeners, who was at hand, to gather Trevor a bouquet to carry home with him, went into the house.

In half an hour from this time, Trevor was on his road to Myrtle Cottage, bearing with him a letter from General Ashley to Mr. Gordon.

Little did Trevor think, as he delivered that letter into the hands of his father, and saw him reading it, how much it had the power to change his own destiny.

After some kind expressions of esteem and regard for Mr. Gordon and his family, General Ashley wrote, that as it had not pleased Providence that he and Mrs. Ashley should be blessed with a child, they had come to the determination of adopting one; wishing that when they grew old, and the world's pleasures receded from them, they might have some one to cling to. "Some loving

heart," as the letter expressed it, "that would, in return for any worldly benefits it is in our power to confer, attach itself to us, and soothe and cheer our declining years. We have long," the letter went on to say, "sought for a child on whom to bestow our affection and our fortune; but we have hitherto been unfortunate: we never met with one whom we desired to take to our home and call our son, till we met with Trevor—you will guess the rest of what I would say."

General Ashley then stated more fully what his intentions were respecting the boy, provided his parents would consent to part with him. He said he would on no account separate the child entirely from his family, and that the vicinity of Pinegroves to Myrtle Cottage would admit of Trevor's making weekly visits to his home. That he should provide him with a private tutor, and that he should educate and treat him in every respect as if he was really and actually his own son.

Long before Mr. Gordon had read this letter through, Trevor had bounded off to seek his brothers and sisters; had flown from one room to another, hailing each beloved one with fond expressions; rejoicing in the sight of each dear familiar object, and finally racing round the garden in the exuberance of his delight on returning to his family and his happy home.

It was no small addition to Trevor's pleasure to find Allen at the villa, who had come from London on a short visit to his family, whom he wished to see after the severe illness many of them had gone through.

It will readily be supposed that General Ashley's proposal of adopting Trevor filled the hearts of his parents with many conflicting emotions. They wished to do what

was best, and there could be little doubt that to accept such kind an offer would be most advantageous to Trevor. Still it was most painful to part with their child ; at the same time, they argued that in a very few years he must leave them to seek his own fortune ; that it would not be proper, even if they could afford to do so, to keep him idle at home, and that the separation would be of the pleasantest kind possible.

Trevor would be frequently coming to see them, and when not with them, he would be under the care and protection of the best and most generous of men.

When Trevor was made acquainted with the subject that so powerfully agitated the minds of his parents, he burst into tears, and throwing his arms round his mother's neck, declared he never would leave her ; and when his father talked to him of what an advantageous thing it would be for him to be General Ashley's adopted son, the boy declared, half-choked with sobs, that he had rather sit in his father's sick-room and nurse him all his life, than go away and live with the richest gentleman in all the world.

Nothing was then said by either of his parents to press the offer upon their boy ; indeed, tears would have prevented his mother from speaking, and his father felt at the moment that if he ever had possessed them, he had entirely lost the powers of persuasion.

At the same time, both Mr. and Mrs. Gordon felt it would be their duty, after a while, to reason with their son, and point out to him advantages arising from his acceptance of General Ashley's proposal, that, with the boy's limited experience of life, it was not to be expected he could be aware of.

But what Allen said had more weight with Trevor

than anything advanced by his parents. Talking with his brother the next day, he said, among other things,

"If you love papa and mamma so dearly as I know you do, you should consider that by going to General Ashley's you benefit them.

"How can that be?" asked Trevor.

"Does it not strike you that you will at once relieve them of all the charge of educating and maintaining you? Osmond is away, and I dare say Edward will be soon, and then there will only be papa to teach you, and he is so unwell, that I am sure it will be as much as he can do to attend to the little boys. And as to the other part of the business, there would be one less in family to provide for."

Trevor was silent for a few moments, when he broke out with,

"It is so sad to leave papa and mamma, and all my brothers and sisters!"

"You know," replied Allen, "that you cannot live always at home, like a girl; you must go into the world to obtain your own living. It is very sad at first leaving all those we love behind; I have felt it painfully enough myself, I well know that; but after a time, the thought that we are doing right comforts us, and reconciles us to the change."

"Pinegroves is not so very far off," observed Trevor, pondering on his brother's advice.

"No," replied Allen; "and it is a beautiful place, and its master is a fine, noble, generous man."

"I love General Ashley," said Trevor.

"And he has given a strong proof that he loves you," replied Allen.

There is no occasion to repeat what more was said by any one to Trevor; it is sufficient to state, that he finally agreed to General Ashley's proposal, and in about a week from his last return from Pinegroves he was welcomed back by that gentleman as his adopted son.

Trevor's eyes were swelled with crying; and tears were still wet on his cheeks when he entered his new home. General Ashley did not like his adopted son the less for this demonstration of a feeling heart, and he trusted to time to direct a portion of such warm affections to himself. In this he was not mistaken, for without in the least lessening the love he felt for his own family, Trevor soon entertained towards General Ashley the sentiments of a deeply-attached and dutiful son.

After a time, he used to say, with a merry laugh, that he was the happiest boy living, for he had two of the best fathers and two of the best mothers in the world.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Dear to a heart where nought was left so dear.

BYRON.

He felt that if of charm was life bereft,
Yet e'en for him some comfort there was left.

JANE TAYLOR.

Soon after the fête at Hunter Hall, a fête which was attended by so much that was disagreeable to the givers of it, an event occurred which made all the petty annoyances and vanities of life, which, at the moment, appeared of so much importance, fade away into perfect insignificance, and be no more remembered. The son and heir of the

house, the only child, a boy of great promise, was suddenly cut off at the early age of thirteen. For some months the unhappy mother remained shut up, inconsolable, refusing to see any of her neighbours, or to go anywhere from home. After a time, she seemed to want the society of her fellow-creatures, and looked round to see who would best condole with her in her affliction, and afford her that sympathy in her sorrow which her bereaved state demanded.

No one appeared so likely to enter into her feelings, and to soothe and comfort her stricken heart as Mrs. Gordon, herself the tender mother of promising children.

Mrs. Gordon was sitting, one morning, talking to Frank, in order to prevent his too close application to his books, and reminding him of Mr. Howard's objection to much study, when Mrs. Hunter, accompanied by a little foreign-looking girl, was shown into the room.

Mrs. Gordon received her visitor with great kindness, and evinced by her feeling manner how truly she sympathized with the unhappy lady in her deep distress. She encouraged Mrs. Hunter to talk of her lost boy, listened with interest to all the details of his short illness, and entered warmly into the poor mother's little histories of his many virtues and endearing qualities. From time to time, Mrs. Hunter fixed her eyes, with a mournful expression, on Frank, as he reclined on a sofa opposite to her, at the same moment exclaiming, in a subdued tone of voice—

"How like that boy is to my poor dear child; I often thought and said so when he was alive, and I used to see them together."

In the mean time the little girl had drawn near to Frank, who, though he spoke graciously to her, and she

looked kindly at him, made no reply to what he said. Frank made room for her to sit beside him on the sofa, and guessing from her air and character to what nation she belonged, addressed her in German. The child uttered an exclamation of pleasure at hearing her native tongue, and began to talk freely to Frank, who conversed fluently with her.

Mrs. Hunter, remarking on what was going forward, said to Mrs. Gordon—

“How clever your children are! That boy is talking German as readily as he does English.”

Mrs. Gordon observed that her children had learned to speak German from having a nurse who understood no other language.

“I wish,” said Mrs. Hunter, with a sigh, “that I had had such an advantage in my youth; but I was a sickly spoiled child, and my education was neglected.”

Mrs. Gordon said something respecting the little girl, which led Mrs. Hunter to tell her friend that she was an orphan, whom she had taken charge of out of kindness, and was going to carry back to her native country; that Augustine,—that was the child’s name,—had lost her mother a year ago, and that her father had brought the little girl over with him a few weeks since, when he came to England to fulfil a musical engagement he had made, and that, dying suddenly, his child had been left unprotected in a land of strangers, and in total ignorance of the language.

“An acquaintance of mine in town,” continued Mrs. Hunter, “told me this history; and my husband and I having determined to go on the Continent to change the scene, we settled we would as soon travel in Germany and

Austria as anywhere else, and that taking this poor child to Vienna, where she has relations, would give a degree of interest to our melancholy tour."

Mrs. Gordon applauded the benevolent action, and said Augustine was happy in having found such friends.

"The worst part of the affair," said Mrs. Hunter, "is, that my husband and I cannot understand a word the child says, neither can she in the least comprehend us when we speak. I fear we shall have to engage a German governess, who must act as interpreter, not only between us and Augustine, but throughout our journey; and in our state of spirits, a person of this kind would be a great tax upon us."

After a little more conversation on the subject, Mrs. Hunter, saying that her visit had rather cheered her spirits, and warmly pressing Mrs. Gordon's hand, prepared to depart; but Augustine hung back, and expressed, in her native tongue, her unwillingness to go.

"Poor child!" said Mrs. Hunter, "she is delighted to have found some one who can talk to her. Tell her, Frank, that she must come with me now, and that I will bring her soon again to see you. That is," continued she, turning to Mrs. Gordon, "if I do not oppress you with my melancholy countenance and sad histories."

Mrs. Gordon cordially invited Mrs. Hunter to repeat her visit as often as was agreeable.

"Come, Augustine," said Mrs. Hunter, looking kindly at the little girl, and holding out her hand to her, "you must come away now;" and though the child did not comprehend a word she said, she continued—"we will both come and see Frank again; you to talk to him, and I to look at one who so closely resembles my poor departed boy."

Although Augustine permitted herself to be led away at this time, it was not more than two days before she reappeared at the villa, in company with her kind protectress.

"You see us soon again, my dear Mrs. Gordon," said Mrs. Hunter, endeavouring to assume something of a cheerful air; "but poor Augustine, though she cannot speak a word of English, contrives to make her wishes pretty plainly known; and ever since our visit to you, she has been pining to return.

"I am very happy to see you and her both," said Mrs. Gordon, in a pleasing, cheerful manner.

"I knew very well what the child wanted," continued Mrs. Hunter, "by the signs she made, pointing in the direction of your house, and fetching her bonnet and mantle; and when I shook my head, and made her understand we could not go, she began to cry; and she has been so unhappy, that at last I gave way, and brought her here. See how gay and happy she is now, chatting away with your children."

Presently, on Augustine looking very serious, and Frank gravely talking to her, Mrs. Hunter asked Harry what his brother was saying.

"He is telling the little girl," replied Harry, "that you have been so kind to her, in taking pity on her in a strange land, that she ought to be very good, and love and obey you."

"Dear boy!" exclaimed Mrs. Hunter, "how very amiable."

At the same moment Augustine came up to her, and said in English—

"Kind lady, I thank you!"

"Frank taught her those words," said Harry; "my brother says she is so quick, she would soon learn to speak English if she was taught."

Poor Mrs. Hunter lingered long at the villa, for she was cheered by Mrs. Gordon's friendly and sympathizing manner, and the children, especially Frank, amused and interested her.

When at last the hour of departure came, Augustine, who appeared even more unwilling to go away than on her previous visit, said a few words in a very earnest manner to Frank, and repeated them many times, increasing in energy as she thought she was not sufficiently attended to.

"What is the matter now? What is she saying?" again inquired Mrs. Hunter.

"She is asking Frank to go to Hunter Hall along with you and her," said Harry.

"Oh, how happy I should be to have him with us!" exclaimed the poor bereaved mother; "I have been wishing that it could be, many times, as I looked at that dear boy; but I would not make such a request, fearing he was in too delicate health to leave home. But," continued she, turning with an imploring look to Mrs. Gordon, "if you would trust Frank with me, I would take the greatest care of him. I would attend to him with the utmost solicitude; his own mother would not watch him more than I shall."

Mrs. Gordon, though very prudent, was not one of those mothers who imagine a thousand dangers will assail their children when removed from the immediate protection of their parents, and having reason to believe that Frank would be perfectly safe and carefully attended to at Hunter Hall, accepted the invitation for him.

She knew, also, that Mr. Howard recommended change of air, and she perceived that the difference of scene would not be unpleasant to Frank. It was therefore arranged that Mrs. Hunter should come for Frank on the following day, and the lady and her little companion departed, well pleased with the result of their visit to Myrtle Cottage.

When Frank had been at Hunter Hall nearly a week, Mr. Howard, who had been sent for to attend one of the servants who was ill, came into the room where Mrs. Hunter and the children were engaged, the lady in listening, and the little girl in receiving a lesson in English from Frank.

Mr. Howard inquired kindly after the boy's health, and perceiving that he still coughed, told Mrs. Hunter that she must not let him go out during the cold winds that were then blowing; when, observing Frank's occupation, he exclaimed—

"Books, always books! do you not remember my warning?"

"Oh!" said Frank, laughing, "I have not much to do with books here; Augustine will not let me; she is always wanting me to play with her."

"That is right," said Mr. Howard; "and you can teach your little playmate English, which is what I perceive you were about just now, quite as well running about as sitting still. Away with you, now, and have a good game."

Mr. Howard was a kind-hearted, benevolent man, and endowed with strong sense and good judgment, and very often his patients consulted him in other matters besides their bodily ailments. He knew the history of the little

German girl, and had been made acquainted with Mrs. Hunter's doubts and fears on the subject of a governess to accompany her in her travels.

As soon as the children had moved away, Mr. Howard, struck with a sudden thought, exclaimed—

“Why do you not take that boy travelling with you? He would suit you far better than any governess, and the journey would be the means of restoring him to health.”

Mrs. Hunter replied, that nothing would give her and her husband so much pleasure as having Frank of their party, and that they had even talked of the possibility of such a thing being; but she feared she must not make a request of the kind to Frank's parents.

Mr. Howard said that Mr. and Mrs. Gordon were aware how essential to their child's recovery an entire change of air for him was, and he undertook to arrange the whole business for Mrs. Hunter, saying, he was certain Frank's parents would be very thankful to have him taken abroad under such auspicious circumstances.

Mr. Howard, in his long attendance upon Frank, had got attached to him, and without wishing too much to alarm his father and mother, had many times expressed his fears as to his ultimate recovery, unless he could be sent far out of the reach of the cold spring winds of England that were beginning to blow. When the worthy medical man had performed his mission, he mentioned that he had a brother, a physician, residing at Vienna, to whom he would write, and give an especial injunction to bestow his most careful attention upon Frank, adding, that Mr. and Mrs. Gordon might depend upon receiving through him, the most faithful accounts of their son's health.

It was a sore trial to the affectionate parents, the part

ing with their boy for so long a time and to so great a distance; but in this case, as in all others where the welfare of their children was concerned, they put aside all selfish feeling, and agreed to let Frank accompany the Hunters to Vienna.

Frank felt a great deal when the time actually arrived for his leaving home; but he bore bravely up against the trial, thinking, as he told Edward, that "it would be the means of making him a first-rate German teacher, and that then he should get out into the world, and maintain himself."

After a time, very satisfactory letters were received from the travellers. They wrote many times during their journey, and when the party were established for the season in Vienna, Frank sent very amusing accounts of all he saw and did. He spoke in high terms of Mr. and Mrs. Hunter's kindness, and of their watchful care of him. "The only thing," said he, in one of his letters, "that I do not like is, that Mrs. Hunter will not let me study as much as I want."

Dr. Howard wrote, too, that Frank was very much improved in his health, and that in a few months there was every probability of his being as well as ever.

The physician's prognostication proved true, and in half a year from the time of his departure, Frank had grown a strong, robust lad. But his friends heard nothing of his return home, and the next news was, that Frank was studying every morning at the first school in Vienna.

In answer to a letter Mr. Gordon wrote, thanking Frank's excellent friends for their care of him, and begging that, now he was well, he might no longer trespass

on their kindness,—Mr. Hunter wrote an earnest entreaty to be allowed to keep the boy longer with his wife and himself.

“I do assure you,” said Mr. Hunter in his letter, “we do our best not to spoil your amiable and clever boy with false indulgence, but strive to behave to him in every respect as if he was our own son. Frank is loved by my wife second only to our own poor boy; and in forwarding his interests and studying how best to promote his welfare, she finds her chief happiness. Although Frank goes out a great deal, and has much to entertain him, his pleasures are of a rational kind. For ourselves, we seek no others; affliction has cured us for a time—I would hope for ever, of any love for the frivolous pursuits and amusements of life.

“I will conclude my letter by mentioning what, perhaps, you already know, that Frank’s great ambition is to be, on his return to England, a teacher of languages; there is no reason, with his excellent abilities, why he should not be what he desires; at any rate, he will be sure of our warmest interest and assistance in that profession, or in any other he may at a future time wish to follow.”

CHAPTER XXX.

In Germany some of the most eminent of the medical profession have estimated that, in the aggregate, smoking shortens the duration of life ten years. In France, America, our own country, and others as well, the evil effects of the poisons imbibed in smoking are well understood. But the tobacco-smoker, like the opium-chewer, becomes enslaved by the practice, and is unwilling to inquire into the truths that are advanced for his good.—ADDRESS TO SMOKERS OF TOBACCO.

Pernicious weed! whose scent the fair annoys,
 Unfriendly to society's chief joys,
 Thy worst effects is banishing for hours
 The sex whose presence civilizes ours;
 Thou art, indeed, the drug a gardener wants,
 To poison vermin that infect his plants;
 But are we so to wit and beauty blind,
 As to despise the glory of our kind,
 And show the softest minds and fairest forms
 As little mercy as the grubs and worms?

COWPER.

OUR history now reverts to the Wylds, of whom for a considerable time we have lost sight.

One day during the latter part of the illness that prevailed among the children at Myrtle Cottage, when Edward was going to Stoneleigh in haste for some medicine that had been omitted to be sent, he came unexpectedly upon Hugh Wyld.

Hugh wished to stop Edward to talk; but finding that Edward did not choose to be detained, he turned back, and walked on with him towards the town.

"You are surprised to see me here at this time, I dare say," said Hugh; "but a fever broke out in our school; one boy died of it; and Peter and I and the rest of us were packed off home in a trice; and glad enough I am of a holiday. I wish, for my part, a fever broke out every month."

"Provided, I suppose," said Edward, "that you are not the first victim."

"Oh! ah! yes," said Hugh; "to be sure; I forgot that. But I am not likely to fall ill. I never am ill; I shall live to be ninety, as my grandfather did before me."

"There is nothing so uncertain as life," said Edward, displeased at the levity of Hugh's manner.

"I should think so," said Hugh, turning full upon Edward, "when I look at you. You look dreadfully bad. What's the matter with you? Are you going to make a die of it, eh? Cannot get over the affair of the five-pound note, I suppose."

Edward's pale cheeks flushed crimson.

"Why do you not," exclaimed Hugh, triumphing in the emotion he had caused, "confess to old Parchment at once, that you stole his money, beg his pardon, and then perhaps he would forgive you and take you back again."

"Do you remember the Long Meadow?" said Edward, turning suddenly so close upon Hugh as to make him start, and the next moment wheel about and run off full speed in an opposite direction.

Angry as Edward felt at being thus impertinently insulted by Hugh, he could not forbear a smile at the talismanic effect produced by the words "Long meadow." Long Meadow was the spot where Edward had fought and vanquished Hugh; and as he looked for a moment at the fast-receding figure of the youth, he said to himself,—

"He has left me master of the field, at any rate."

For some time after this encounter Edward neither saw nor heard anything of Hugh; and he had ceased to think of him, till a report got into general circulation of

the reckless youth having conducted himself in a highly discreditable manner towards a livery-stable keeper, of whom he had hired a valuable horse and returned it greatly injured.

The business gave Mr. Wyld a great deal of trouble; and his eldest son's conduct was altogether so objectionable during the time he was obliged to have him at home, that he resolved upon concluding at once Hugh's school education, and sending him out of the country in some capacity or other.

It was Hugh's last half-year at the public school at which he had been educated, and his father considered it would be worse than useless to send him to college, or endeavour to fit him for one of the learned professions. Hugh's idleness and want of principle would prove an unconquerable bar to his ever getting on in life.

Instead of improving as he grew older, his behaviour was more objectionable than ever. He rebelled against parental authority whenever it was in his power to do so, inciting Peter to follow his bad example; quarrelling incessantly with his sister, and initiating his little brother into a variety of artful and mischievous tricks.

Mr. Wyld wrote to some friends in London, begging them to be on the look-out for some situation that would suit Hugh. Hugh's own wish was to emigrate to some of the gold regions; and he said if his father would come down handsomely with "a good round sum of money to start him," he did not care how soon he was off. But Mr. Wyld, who had a father's duty to perform, insisted on making arrangements for his son's colonizing under advantageous circumstances. After a time, Mr. Wyld received a letter from a gentleman, stating that two or three re-

spectable families with whom he was acquainted were about to emigrate to Australia, and that Hugh could join them ; and that they would, for a compensation, undertake to get him well settled on his arrival in the country.

Mr. Wyld gladly embraced this offer, and hastened off to London to see the parties and make arrangements for his son's accompanying them. Before starting, Mr. Wyld made an earnest appeal to his eldest son to conduct himself with propriety during his absence. He told Hugh that he was going away on his business, that he did not mind any trouble he took for him, that he should do his utmost to promote his welfare ; and all his father asked in return was, that while he was from home the youth would be steady and avoid getting into any more scrapes. He also urged him as the eldest of the family, to set a good example ; and especially recommended him to conduct himself dutifully towards his mother, who was in a poor state of health.

" You have often, Hugh," said Mr. Wyld, as he wrung his son's hand before setting off on his journey, " made your poor mother's and my heart ache. Let your conduct, during the short time you have to remain in your native country, be such that we may remember you with the love and kindness with which we should wish always to think of you, and everything unpleasant will be forgiven and forgotten."

It was a wet day on which Mr. Wyld set off for London ; and about an hour after he was gone, Hugh invited Peter to come and smoke with him in the drawing-room.

The brothers had just finished their first cigar, when their sister Margaret came in to go on with her needle-work. She expressed surprise at seeing Hugh and Peter

so employed in an apartment devoted to the use of the ladies of the family, and complaining loudly of the offensive smell, begged her brothers to leave off smoking.

"Leave off smoking!" exclaimed Hugh; "a good idea, truly!"

"Pray do," said the girl; "I am just suffocated."

"Indeed!" said Hugh, jeeringly; and lighting another cigar, puffed out fresh volumes of the disgusting vapour.

"You ought not to smoke here, you know," urged his sister.

"I know I shall do just as I please," said Hugh, throwing his legs up on a chair; "and if you, Miss Fineairs, do not like our company, why, go somewhere else."

Margaret rose and left the room, but soon returned, saying,

"Mamma is up, and coming down directly, and she orders you to go out of this room immediately;" and seeing that Hugh still hesitated, she added, "if you do not, she will tell papa when he comes home. You know the smell of tobacco always makes her ill."

Hugh kicked away the chair on which his legs had been resting, and catching at his sister's workbox as he rose from his seat, overturned the contents on to the ground, and swung out of the room, Peter following him.

The brothers then betook themselves and their cigars to the kitchen, a favourite place of resort, and amused themselves when there with vulgar talk with the footman, or in annoying the maids by puffing clouds of smoke into their faces.

There is no confining fumes of tobacco, and though removed from their mother's immediate presence, the insid-

ious vapour circulated through the house, poisoning the atmosphere, and greatly distressing her.

Mrs. Wyld sent several times to desire her sons to cease the annoyance; but all they did was to return for answer that "the kitchen door was shut."

Had Mr. Wyld been at home, the boys would not, regardless as they were of the comfort of others, have dared to smoke in the house. Their father, on his return home of an evening, having been once or twice annoyed with the "most offensive odour of stale tobacco" hanging round the room, inquired the cause, and learning that Hugh and Peter had been smoking in the house, threatened them with severe punishment if ever they repeated the offence.

Mr. Wyld was very sorry that his sons had acquired this vice, more especially at their early age. As a young man he had never smoked himself, and he condemned the practice upon principle, regarding it as offensive to others, and injurious to health.

After a time, the young gentlemen having smoked as much as they wished for the present, Hugh went upstairs, and entertained himself till dinner-time by firing off a pistol at the sparrows from an open window, to the great annoyance of a nervous old lady who lived at the next house.

"The feast of reason and the flow of soul" had never prevailed at Hugh and Peter Wyld's meals, and after greedily devouring their dinner, and drinking two or three glasses of ale, Hugh expressed a wish for some hot brandy and water. This Mrs. Wyld positively refused, till, on the cloth being removed, and the servant withdrawn, he assured her he had caught his "death of cold" this wet day; and the weak mother produced a bottle of brandy.

She, however, insisted on helping the "fire-water" herself, and put a very small quantity into Hugh's glass. Hugh laughed within himself at this precaution, and when his mother's attention was directed to Arthur, who came in to dessert, he caught hold of the bottle, and helped himself with an unsparing hand.

When his mother and sister were retiring to the drawing-room, Hugh caught hold of Arthur, and induced him to stop behind, saying he had got something to give him.

As soon as the door was shut, Hugh gave the little boy some of his brandy-and-water, the strength of which soon affected his head, and made him rude and noisy.

"That's right," cried Hugh; "bluster about; act like a man; stick your arms akimbo, and put this cigar in your mouth, and puff away."

"I cannot smoke," said the child, after making two or three attempts to do as desired.

"Try again," said Hugh.

"It makes me sick," said Arthur.

"Nonsense," exclaimed his brother; "look at me; see how beautiful it is!" And Hugh, placing the cigar in his mouth, alternately inhaled, and sent forth clouds of smoke, with the sublime and inebriated look of an entranced sot.

Arthur gazed at his brother, but it was not till the bribe of a sixpence was offered that Hugh succeeded in persuading the child to make another attempt.

Holding the coin up to view, Hugh induced the little boy to take another and another whiff of the cigar, till his head reeled, and he tottered off to throw himself on the hearth-rug beside his mother in the drawing-room.

Hugh followed after a time to tea, and found his mo-

ther bewailing over Arthur, who was complaining of violent headache and sickness.

"How he does smell of tobacco smoke," said Mrs. Wyld, as the nurse raised the little boy to carry him off to bed.

"Master Hugh," replied the nurse, "has been at his tricks, making the child smoke; and that is the cause of the poor dear's pain."

"For shame, Hugh!" exclaimed Mrs. Wyld, "how dare you do so?"

"I only wanted to make him manly," said Hugh, quite unabashed.

"Is disobedience to parents, and being exceedingly disagreeable and disobliging, manly?" asked Mrs. Wyld of her son, in a low, crying tone of voice. "You make my life miserable by your behaviour, Hugh; indeed you do."

Hugh made no reply, and Peter bringing up the backgammon-board, the undutiful youth was soon engaged in noisy play with his brother, disputing with him over the games, and quarrelling about the stakes; for these boys played for money.

Peter, contrary to his usual custom, won, which made Hugh so angry, that, after a time, he shut up the backgammon-board in a passion, declaring that he would not play any more that night, and that his brother had "cheated him," using that vulgar expression.

"I must be monstrous cunning to do that," said Peter, jingling his winnings in his hands; "I played quite fair."

"Well, fair or not," exclaimed Hugh; "I will make you remember it, Mr. Peter; that I will. I will have my revenge on you to-morrow."

"To-morrow is Sunday," said Margaret.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Hardening a heart that loathes or slighta
 What every natural heart enjoys;
 Who never caught a noontide dream
 From murmur of a running stream.

* * * * *
 * * * Who grovels, self-debarred
 From all that lies within the scope
 Of holy faith and Christian hope.

WORDSWORTH.

Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring
 forth.—PROVERBS xxvii. 1.

MRS. WYLD rose late on the following morning, having been disturbed during the night by Arthur, who slept in the same room with her. The child had been rendered seriously unwell from the effects of the brandy and tobacco, so mischievously and cruelly administered by his elder brother.

Though unable to attend church herself, she sent word to desire the younger members of the family to go. Margaret and her brothers were sitting over a late breakfast when the servant brought Mrs. Wyld's message.

Hugh and Peter did not condescend to return any answer, only Margaret replied, "They were none of them dressed, and there was no time to prepare."

There was time enough, had the occupation been what the youthful party liked, or had they chosen to be dutiful and obedient to their mother.

Mrs. Wyld bitterly lamented that she had little or no authority over her children. "I am sure," said she often to herself, "I indulged them enough when they were little, and was always giving up to them. No mother could have been kinder."

Poor Mrs. Wyld was falsely indulgent; she mistook the road to her own and her children's happiness. She had no firmness, and suffered her word to be constantly disputed. If she desired to be respected and obeyed by her children as they grew up, she should have made them mind her when they were little.

Arthur, getting better during the course of the morning, his mother proposed attending afternoon service at church. Margaret was prepared to accompany her, and she desired that Hugh and Peter would do so too.

"It is a shame," said Mrs. Wyld, addressing her sons, "that our pew stood empty this morning. I wonder what the clergyman thought of not one of the family being at church."

"Thought we were ill, I dare say," said Hugh, carelessly.

"That is not very likely, I think," said Margaret, "when you and Peter were lounging about the street just as the congregation were coming out."

"You had better have been about your own business, Miss Blab, than looking after us," retorted Hugh.

Margaret answered angrily; and Mrs. Wyld, tired of the constant bickering and disputes of the young people, called to her daughter to set out with her, desiring her sons to follow.

"I am going now," said Mrs. Wyld, "for I cannot walk fast; and do you, Hugh and Peter, follow in time, so as to be at the beginning of the service."

The two lads appeared to pay but little attention to what their mother said, and she repeated her orders.

"Do you hear me, Hugh and Peter?" said she, as she went out; "I insist on your coming to church."

"Very well," said Peter; and thrusting a handful of almonds and raisins into his pocket to eat during the sermon, he reached his hat, and was leaving the room when Hugh called to him.

"Halloa, I say; where are you off to?"

"To church," I suppose, said Peter, making a wry face.

"To church!" repeated Hugh; "you are not in earnest?"

"I suppose I am," replied Peter; "*she* told us we must go."

"Are you turning saint?" asked Hugh, with a look of derision, such as Peter never could withstand. Then bursting into a fit of laughter, he continued, "I have laid my plans for a little fun this afternoon; the gov'nor's out, and we will have a row on the river."

"We cannot get a boat at this time," said Peter.

"Cannot we, though?" said Hugh. "Come along with me and see. I told Bob Bright to have his father's boat lying along by our back premises, at three o'clock this afternoon."

"Is he to row?" asked Peter.

"Not a bit of it," replied Hugh; "we are to have the boat all to ourselves, and the sport too."

"Indeed!" said Peter; "well, I do think that will be better than going to church."

"I should fancy so," said Hugh; "but come along, let us make haste. I have got the key of the garden-gate; we can let ourselves out that way, and we can climb over the hedge at the bottom of the field and be down by the river in five minutes."

So saying, he flung away the newspaper he had been reading, and calling again to Peter to "come along quick-

ly," he set off, wholly indifferent to the commands of his mother, regardless of his duty towards his Maker, and without a single thought crossing his mind that it was God's holy day that he was thus desecrating. Added to his own improper conduct, he was leading his brother astray, having first crushed by ridicule the faint attempt that Peter had made to do what was right.

Peter had not yet quite succeeded in stifling the voice of conscience ; weak as it was, it would sometimes whisper to him and bring to his remembrance words he had heard when, as a little child, he used to stand at his mother's knee and repeat the hymns she had taught him.

For a short time, a very short time, as he followed his brother, he experienced a slight sense of uneasiness. But Peter was weak and irresolute, and suffered himself in all things to be led by Hugh, who, from Peter's earliest years, had dominion over his brother, compelling him by ridicule, or force, or persuasion, to follow his example.

Sometimes Hugh's exploits were not altogether of a pleasant nature, but his present scheme was quite to Peter's taste ; and by the time he had reached the river and saw the boat reposing on its tranquil surface, everything like doubt as to the propriety of his conduct had vanished from his mind.

On first setting out, Hugh called to his dog to follow him. This dog had once been a great favourite, and notwithstanding the occasional kicks and blows bestowed upon it by its capricious master, was still attached to him with that beautiful and enduring love with which the brute creation might put to shame the weak and changeable affections of proud and reasoning man.

The poor dog was now old, and suffering from a com-

plaint that made his coat come off. When his master called to him to follow, he was lying basking in the sun, and Peter said it was a pity to disturb the animal; but Hugh whistled, and the obedient dog limped after its owner. Arrived at the river-side, Hugh gathered up a few large stones, and tying them in a handkerchief, threw them into the boat; and jumping in after, desired the lad in attendance to lift in the dog. Peter followed, and the brothers, each taking a scull, proceeded down the river. The boat was light and easily managed, so that, little experienced as these boys were in rowing, they had no difficulty in getting along.

It was a lovely afternoon, at the beginning of the month of April; the trees were just putting forth their leaves of tenderest green, and the banks of the river were gay with patches of primroses, while ever and anon from some shady nook, the soft perfume of the violet was wafted by on the passing breeze. The sun shone brightly, and not a cloud obscured the clear blue sky.

But the charms of the scene were disregarded by Hugh. He perceived not the odour of the violet, for the fumes of his cigar poisoned the breath of nature. He saw not the sky, except as he watched his oar breaking its dark reflection in the water.

The youths had not proceeded far, when Hugh, handing over his scull to his brother, bid him attend to the boat. Peter, well pleased to be intrusted with the sole management of it, pulled lustily away, and, wholly absorbed in his amusement, took no notice of what his brother was doing, till a cry from the dog attracted his attention, and he perceived Hugh, who, having dragged the dog from under his seat, and first tied the handkerchief of stones,

before mentioned, round his neck, was proceeding to throw the animal into the river.

"What are you about? what are you going to do?" exclaimed Peter, suspending his rowing.

Hugh made no reply, but stooped after the dog, which, with an instinctive feeling that something was wrong, had crouched down under his cruel master's feet.

"You are not going to drown the dog, surely?" cried Peter.

"I am, though," said Hugh, raising the dog in his arms; "nasty mangy old thing. So here goes;" and in another moment the animal would have been overboard, if Peter had not sprung forward and seized it by its collar.

"Do not drown the poor brute," cried Peter; "Fred Harris will take him: he said he would."

"Fred Harris said no such thing, I know," said Hugh; "and if he did, I will not wait till he comes back."

"He will be back in a week," said Peter.

"And, in the mean time, the young dog I have just bought may catch this brute's complaint."

"He has no complaint," said Peter, raising his voice, for he felt angry at his brother's wanton cruelty; "he is only old, and, Fred Harris says, will be as handsome as ever when his new coat grows."

"I do not care for Fred Harris, nor you either," cried Hugh; "the dog is mine, and I will do as I like with him."

"You shall not drown him, however," said Peter, now irritated against his brother for his contemptuous manner of mentioning him and his friend.

"I shall not drown him, do you say?" cried Hugh.

"No, you shall not," said Peter, still retaining a firm hold on the dog's collar.

"Let go; do you hear!" cried Hugh, roused into passion by Peter's opposition.

But Peter would not let go, and a violent struggle for the mastery of the dog ensued, during which time the brothers, wholly regardless of their situation, swayed the boat from side to side, at the imminent peril of their safety, and just at the moment when Hugh had torn the dog from Peter's grasp, it capsized, and both brothers were plunged into the water.

Neither Hugh nor Peter could swim.

CHAPTER XXXII.

The dew seemed to sparkle more brightly on the green leaves; the air to rustle among them with a sweeter music; and the sky itself to look more blue and bright. Such is the influence which the condition of our own thoughts exercises even over the appearance of external objects.—CHARLES DICKENS.

We need be careful how we deal with those about us, when every death carries to some small circle thoughts of so much omitted, and so little done—of so many things forgotten, and so many more which might have been repaired! There is no remorse so deep as that which is unavailing; if we would be spared its tortures let us remember this in time.—*Idem*.

In the mean time a very different Sabbath was passing with the Gordons. Always up early on Sunday morning, there was time for devotional exercises at home, and for the mind to be calmed and prepared for joining in public worship. All the family, when not prevented by illness, or any other accidental cause, went regularly twice a day to church. The family pew at the parish church was hardly large enough to contain all the children when

Mr. Gordon was able to go, and often, during the warm weather, some of the boys walked to the neighbouring village church, where a favourite preacher of Edward and Osmond officiated.

On the present afternoon, when Divine service was over, the two brothers agreed that, as the day was so delightful, they would prolong their walk by going the longest way home. Their path lay for some little way across green meadows, where flocks of sheep, with their little lambs beside them, were browsing on the tender herbage. Passing through a small copse, ringing with the sweet notes of the thrush and the blackbird, the brothers came out upon the river, beside which their road ran for a considerable distance. Edward and Osmond felt the soothing influence of the scene, listening with delight to the song of the birds, and lingering on the borders of the stream, as it glided gently by, every now and then stooping to gather the wild flowers that adorned its banks, or to watch the glancing movements of the insect tribes, as they sported in the sunshine.

The brothers talked to each other as they sauntered slowly along, and, after a time, their conversation became so interesting as wholly to engross their attention.

The theme of their discourse was the Sabbath, and the duties it involved. Their thoughts were more particularly directed to this subject, from the sermon they had just been listening to, the text of which was taken from the fourth commandment. The sermon had pleased both the boys, and they each recalled to the other some of the passages with which they had been particularly struck; after which their conversation still turned on the same subject,—the observance of the Sabbath.

After enumerating various advantages arising from keeping holy the Sabbath-day, Edward said it had always struck him, that one of the greatest blessings attendant upon refraining from secular employments on that day, was the certainty that man's worldly affairs prosper all the better for abstaining from them on the sacred day.

"Mind and body," said Osmond, "are both strengthened and refreshed by the rest."

"This, like all the commands of God," said Edward, "is intended for man's benefit. The best and wisest of men have concurred in this opinion, and have devoted the Sabbath to those employments and studies which are to fit him for a happy eternity."

"You remember," said Osmond, "what Matthew Hale said."

"The good and wise judge," replied Edward; "yes, I remember the sentiment, though I am not certain I could quote his words quite correctly."

"Nor I, either," said Osmond; "but, as nearly as I can recollect, they were these: 'I do not say it lightly nor unadvisedly, but I have always found, that according as I spend my Sundays, so my week prospers. If I have been occupied with worldly affairs, all goes wrong; if, on the contrary, my attention has been directed to spiritual concerns, the reverse is the case, and what I do succeeds.'"

"Dr. Johnson, too," said Edward, "was very strict in his observance of Sunday; and it was owing to his influence that Sir Joshua Reynolds, after a time, never used his pencil on the sacred day."

"Neither will I," said Osmond, fervently; "and I sincerely hope that, during this short life, I—"

Here he stopped suddenly, exclaiming—

“Hark! did you not hear a shriek?”

“I could fancy I did,” replied Edward.

“I am sure of it,” cried Osmond; “and there it is again.”

“I heard it plainly then,” said Edward; “whence did it proceed?”

“On in front,” replied Osmond, “along the river-side; let us hasten to the spot, there is some one in distress,” and he and Edward ran forward as fast as they could, and in a few minutes arrived at the place where the Wylds had fallen into the river.

Hugh had sunk to rise no more, but Peter was still visible on the surface of the stream. In a moment Edward had thrown off his coat, plunged into the water, and was swimming to the rescue of the drowning youth. Osmond was preparing to follow his brother, when he felt his progress arrested by a strong arm, and on turning to look, found himself held back by a tall powerful man in the dress of a day-labourer, who had also been attracted to the spot by the cries of the Wylds.

“Let me go,” exclaimed Osmond, impatiently; “I must follow my brother.”

“No, no,” said the man; “it is no use risking your life for nothing.”

“I can swim,” cried Osmond; “do not hold me back.”

“What should you go for?” said the man, still retaining his grasp of the excited and terrified youth; “see, your brother has saved the lad, and is swimming back with him to land.”

This was true; for Edward, though encumbered with

clothes, was so good a swimmer, that he got up to Peter just as he was sinking for the last time, and catching hold of him by the hair, brought him to the margin of the river.

Here Osmond and the labouring man assisted in dragging the body of the wretched youth out of the water. He was to all appearance dead ; but Edward, whose presence of mind did not forsake him, looked round for the means of conveying Peter to the nearest house, in the hope that life was not quite extinct.

"His own home is the nearest, if we could get him there," said Osmond ; and the same moment the sound of wheels was heard.

A part of the high road to Stoneleigh ran beside the river, just where Peter had been drawn out, and as Osmond spoke, a neighbouring farmer, in a light cart, appeared, driving his wife and children home from church.

It was the work of a moment to hail the man, to cause the woman and children to dismount from the cart, and to place the drowned youth in it. Osmond jumped in, and Edward would have followed ; but his brother entreated, and finally insisted on his going home immediately to change his wet clothes.

"You can come to us afterwards," said Osmond, as he placed himself in the bottom of the cart, where Peter was lying, and raised his lifeless head on his knees.

"Stop at Mr. Howard's ; you pass his house," called out Edward, as the farmer flogged his horse into a gallop.

In a very few minutes, by taking a short cut, the melancholy party arrived at the house of Mr. Wyld, where they were quickly followed by Mr. Howard, having providentially met that gentleman on the way, when,

without stopping, the farmer made signs to him to come after them.

Mrs. Wyld and her daughter arrived at home just as the lifeless body of Peter was being removed from the cart. In a few moments the wretched mother learned what had happened, and fell insensible to the ground, while the cries of Margaret pierced the ears of the crowd who had gathered round the house to learn what was the matter.

Prompt measures were taken for the relief of the sufferers; and all that the utmost skill and the most judicious treatment could effect was tried for the recovery of Peter.

Edward hastened home, and quickly changing his dress, ran as fast as he could to the house, where dismay and terror reigned, hoping to be able to render some assistance.

He did not stop to knock, but turning the handle of the door, let himself in, and proceeded up-stairs.

Margaret heard his step, and came crying out of her mother's room.

"Is he saved?" exclaimed she. "Is Hugh saved? Mr. Howard sent men to search for him."

Edward looked mournfully at the girl, for he felt that all attempts to rescue Hugh would be unavailing, but he answered,—

"I do not know; I come from home; Peter—will he recover?"

"I cannot tell; I fear not;" replied Margaret, in a tone of anguish. "But Hugh, will he not be saved? Oh! that he had been with us at church—there was such a sermon—so much said about dying impenitent. But I

must go to my poor mamma, she has one fainting fit after another."

Edward hastened on to the room where means were being vigorously pursued in the hope of resuscitating Peter. Mr. Howard cast an approving look on Edward as he entered, and immediately employed him.

Osmond was on the spot, exerting himself to the utmost.

It was a full hour and half before Mr. Howard ventured to give any hope to the anxious group around him. After that time, the good results of the unremitting efforts of the medical man and his attendants were plainly perceptible in the returning life and consciousness of the object of their solicitude.

As soon as Peter's fate was ascertained, Edward glided out of the room, and ran down to the river-side. A hope, but a hope so vague as scarcely to be acknowledged to himself, that Hugh might have been found, and still might be recovered, led him to the spot.

Crowds of people were down by the water, and many persons, with anxious and sorrowful countenances, were following on the steps of the men who were employed to drag the river.

"His body is not yet found," said the man who had held back Osmond, addressing Edward, as he made his way through the throng.

"There is no hope, then," said Edward; and he sighed heavily.

After a time, the people by the river-side began to disperse, for the short spring day was drawing fast to a close, and they wanted to return to their homes; but Edward continued to linger about the fatal spot till long after the sun had set, and the moon was risen high in the heavens.

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THE DEATH OF HUGH.

At length, wearied in mind and body with watching, and the exertion and excitement he had undergone, he threw himself on to a little grass mound to repose for a few minutes. The men engaged in their melancholy employment of dragging the river were away a considerable distance from him; and he had almost determined to return to the house, when his quick ear detected sounds of a different character from those to which he had been lately listening. He started up, and running on in the direction of the men, arrived at the spot just as the lifeless body of Hugh Wyld had been drawn from the water and placed on the ground.

Edward shuddered as he looked. There lay the youth, a few hours since so full of boisterous life, cold stiff, and motionless, his pale countenance looking still more ghastly in the moonlight. His faithful dog, in the attempt to destroy whose life Hugh had lost his own, had been freed, in the struggle between the brothers, from the load round his neck, and had swum to shore. The sagacious animal had kept beside the men who were dragging the river, uttering, from time to time, a low piteous whine, and was now standing close to his dead master, licking the hand that could never more rise in threatening against him.

Edward knelt down to take a nearer look at one who in life had hated him, and who, he now remembered in sorrow, had so often excited in his own breast feelings of anger and bitterness.

Some of the weeds, in which Hugh's body had been entangled while in the water, clung round his head, and fell over his forehead; Edward put them aside, and passed his hand gently along the cheek he had once so deeply wounded.

"Hugh," whispered Edward, softly, "would that I could have your forgiveness for that act!"

"What a lesson is this," thought the repentant youth, as tears, unrestrained, fell fast on the cold inanimate form beside him, "upon giving way to passion. Could I have imagined how short this poor fellow's life was to be, how differently would I have acted. Oh! my God, grant me the power for the future to check my angry passions as they rise, and ever give me grace to remember how uncertain is this life, and that death strikes alike the young and the old."

Edward's meditations were here interrupted by the approach of the men who came to bear away the body of the unhappy youth. They carried the corpse home—to that home which, in life, his presence had never gladdened, and through which his untimely death now spread horror and dismay.

It was on Sunday that Hugh was drowned; on the Saturday following his mortal remains were consigned to his early grave.

But what became of his immortal part—the spirit that was to live for ever?

Let the unruly and disobedient son, the wild and lawless Sabbath-breaker, put that question to himself—and answer it.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

The past has been a dreary waste with you, of youthful energies mispent, and such priceless treasures lavished, as the Creator bestows but once, and never grants again; but, for the future, you may hope.—CHARLES DICKENS.

THE melancholy news of Hugh's untimely death brought Mr. Wyld speedily back from London.

He returned to a wretched home. His eldest son, so unprepared to die, cut off prematurely in an act of flagrant disregard of parental authority; Peter confined to his room from the same cause, and his wife in a state bordering on distraction.

After the funeral, the unhappy father and husband often went to seek consolation and support under his heavy affliction from Mr. Gordon, who, ever ready to sympathize with the distressed, listened with sincere sorrow to the expressions of his friend's bitter grief, and to the mournful details of his miserable home.

"Oh, that Hugh had resembled one of your boys!" frequently exclaimed Mr. Wyld; "I need not then be so wretched."

"You have two sons left," Mr. Gordon ventured one day to remark; "act so towards them that you shall have no cause for repentance hereafter."

"What would you have me do?" said Mr. Wyld; "you have proved yourself a kind friend towards me, and I know your advice will be for my benefit. Speak, and tell me what you would have me do?"

Mr. Gordon, thus called upon, advised Mr. Wyld to remove Peter at once from all his old associates, and to place him under the care of a private tutor, who would

have time and inclination to attend to the improvement of the boy's character.

Mr. Wyld replied, that he thought it was the best thing he could do; and called to mind a clergyman living some distance off, who took one or two pupils, and who was very successful in training the youthful mind in the right way, and who kept the boys whose education he undertook constantly with him, appearing to take a sincere delight in doing his duty.

Mr. Gordon then recommended a speedy separation between Arthur and the nurse, who so greatly contributed to spoil the child.

This plan did not appear so feasible to Mr. Wyld, for he said, if he was willing to send the woman away, he was sure his wife would not consent.

"And will you," said Mr. Gordon, impressively, "after the warning you have had, run the risk of destroying your child's temporal and eternal welfare, by not having the resolution to discharge a servant who has acquired an undue and improper influence in your family?"

Mr. Wyld made no reply, but he appeared to be thinking.

"Send Arthur to a preparatory school," said Mr. Gordon; "there is an excellent one, kept by some ladies, a little way out of Stoneleigh."

"I will," said Mr. Wyld, resolutely; "and what you say confirms me in a wish I have long had, to get rid of the child's nurse. I will break up my establishment, and take my wife and daughter abroad."

"The change might greatly benefit Mrs. Wyld," said Mr. Gordon.

"I think it might restore my poor wife to comparative

tranquillity," observed Mr. Wyld. "At any rate, it will be best to separate her from the boys. Peter feels the death of his brother a good deal, and is more gentle towards his mother; and I dread lest the false indulgence that this altered behaviour of his will give rise to on her part may destroy the change for the better that seems now working in his heart."

Mr. Wyld followed out the resolution so wisely made, and in a few weeks after the death of Hugh the whole family, dispersed in different directions, had quitted Stoneleigh.

Mr. Wyld took an affectionate leave of Edward, to whom he had many times expressed the warmest gratitude for having saved the life of his son. Mrs. Wyld sent him a letter, with an inclosure of money, to purchase, as she said, "a mourning-ring, in remembrance of her poor boy Hugh."

Edward wished she would not have sent him money. In saving the life of Peter, he had only, he said, performed an act of common humanity.

At first, Edward's courageous conduct excited among some of the people at Stoneleigh a good deal of approbation, while others looked as coldly on him as ever, saying to themselves, "There was no reason why a dishonest person might not be brave;" and Miss Marvell observed to all her gossiping acquaintances—

"That it was no great thing for a person that could swim, to go to the rescue of a drowning fellow-creature."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Do the good that lies nearest to you.

GERMAN PROVERB.

The thankful heart with eagerness desires
To prove that love which gratitude inspires;
Whose generous acts no coldness will restrain,
But pays with warmth the benefit again.
As rivers' fertilizing powers bestow
A rich luxuriance wheresoe'er they flow,
So secret springs of ever active love
Ascend like fountains to the skies above.

ANON.

THE almost entire absence from home of his elder brothers occasioned Edward a great deal of additional out-door work. One morning, when engaged in making some repairs on a part of the premises, which were much wanted, he ran a rusty nail into his foot. This accident put an entire stop to his work, and confined him to the house for three or four weeks. He was much annoyed, for, independent of the pain he suffered, the repairs he was engaged upon required immediate attention; and Matthew, who would cheerfully have supplied the necessary labour, was unluckily occupied with a job of carpentering several miles from Stoneleigh.

But though Edward regretted the circumstances, he was far from repining at them, and he exerted himself to bear patiently the suffering and confinement to the house which were the natural consequences of his accident.

One evening, when tired with reading and weary with pain, after meditating, as he lay reclined on the sofa, for some time on his various trials, he began considering if he could not in any way turn his present trouble to the advantage of some of his family. "I cannot benefit them,"

said he to himself, "by bodily exertions, and I am at a loss to know what I can do, laid up as I now am, to help them; but I will strive to find out something."

During his musings, Willie, who had stolen in to the pianoforte, was indulging himself with a variety of extempore modulations, and attempting various combinations of chords, which, when he did not succeed in rendering harmonious, annoyed himself, and grated somewhat unpleasantly on the ears of his elder brother.

"It is a pity," said Edward at last, "that you do not learn the right method of forming chords."

"I should be very glad to learn," replied Willie, "if there is any way of being taught."

"Really and truly," asked Edward, "and would you take great pains to learn, if you were instructed?"

"Would I!" eagerly exclaimed Willie; "would I; I would go without breakfast, dinner, and supper for anything belonging to music."

"Well, then," said Edward, smiling, in spite of his pain, at the boy's manner, "I will do what I can to help you. Go into the breakfast-room, and on the fourth bookshelf near the door, you will see "Calcott's Musical Grammar," and another more recent work on the science. I saw them there the other morning when I was putting the books in order."

Willie hastened off well pleased, and soon returning with the works in question, the two brothers began to read, the elder simplifying the matter, and the younger evincing great intelligence and aptness in learning.

Almost from infancy Willie had shown a decided talent for music, and before he could speak plain he was frequently heard humming, in his baby manner, several of

the airs which he had caught from hearing them played. Indeed, such was his decided taste and love for music, added to a fine voice, that he might have been easily educated for a musical prodigy. As it was, his powers in that way had hitherto received no further cultivation than was necessarily gained in a family where the art was constantly practised with success, and the works of the best composers performed. After Fanny had begun to learn, he begged his sister to teach him all she knew which she readily did; but the boy soon surpassed his little instructress, and at the present time he was a very tolerable proficient on the pianoforte.

The study of the science, so far from being wearisome to Willie, delighted him; and, under Edward's guidance, he passed all his leisure time in pursuing it. When speaking one day to his mamma of the pleasure his new occupation afforded him, she produced Corelli's twelve solos, which, at the end of a month, he was able to play from the figured basses.

Edward was much gratified by his brother's progress, and the first time he walked out after his tedious confinement, he experienced a feeling of pleasure in thinking that perhaps good might arise out of his own trouble, for that, if circumstances should ever favour his young brother receiving an education that would fit him for a professor of music, the study of the last few weeks would be of very great advantage to him.

A few days after Edward had begun to go out, Willie came running into a room where the family were assembled, almost breathless with speed and excitement.

"See here!" cried he, and he held up to view two tickets for a concert that was to take place that evening at Stoneleigh.

Willie had been on an errand to the town, and stopping for at least the twelfth time to read the tempting programme standing at the door of a music-shop, the master, who knew the boy's taste, called him in, and presented him with two tickets, which he said his daughters were prevented making use of.

It did not take Willie long to dress, and to persuade Edward to accompany him; and the two brothers set off, well pleased to enjoy a most unexpected musical treat. Willie was so anxious to be in time, that he and his brother arrived just as the doors were opened. Their tickets were for the reserved seats, and Willie, after trying first one situation and then another, in order to be in the best possible place for hearing, at last made choice of two front chairs directly facing the musicians' platform.

Willie had never been at a concert before, and he could hardly restrain his impatience till it began. At last the performance opened with a noisy overture, which was followed by a succession of vocal and instrumental pieces of a popular, but by no means high character of music, and Willie was beginning to think that a concert was not quite so charming an entertainment as he had imagined, when, toward the close of the last act, a young man of the name of English came forward to sing a piece of music of his own composition. The air was full of beautiful pathos, and the accompaniment consisted of fine harmonies. Mr. English's voice was a rich tenor, and though he gave his song with an exquisite taste and feeling, it fell coldly on the ears of the commercial audience of Stoneleigh. Not so with Willie; he was entranced with the music, and the performance of it, and, carried away by the enthusiasm of his feelings, he jumped on to

his chair, and clapping his hands violently, called loudly for an encore.

Mr. English, who was making his retiring bow, caught sight of the boy, stopped short, smiled, and repeated his song, singing entirely to Willie, as if there was no other person in the concert-room. When the repeat was over, Willie leaned back on his seat, and covered his face with his hands, as though he would retain for ever such charming sounds ; while the audience, either from arriving at a juster appreciation of excellence in music, or from being pleased with the good nature of the singer in indulging a boy's fancy, rewarded Mr. English with a round or two of boisterous applause.

The following morning Willie discovered that he had dropped a new pair of gloves in the concert-room, and begged Edward to go with him, and ask if they had been found.

On arriving at the Bugle Inn, where the concert had been held, the brothers saw congregated round the door a party of the performers of the preceding evening. They were looking at the *Stoneleigh Gazette*, a paragraph in which seemed to afford them much amusement, for they were laughing heartily, especially Willie's friend.

Willie would have liked to thank Mr. English for his attention to his wishes the evening before, but a feeling of diffidence restrained him, and he was passing on, when Mr. English observing him, spoke to him ; and the opportunity was thus afforded the boy of expressing his obligation.

"It is I who ought to thank you, my little friend," said Mr. English, "for the honours you have been the means of bringing on me. See here what the good people

of Stoneleigh say ;" and he pointed to a notice of the concert in the *Gazette*, where it was stated that that unrivalled tenor, Mr. English, sung a song of his own composition, which was encored amidst thunders of applause, and at the close of the concert, this talented gentleman was engaged, at a high salary, by Mr. Ledman, to sing at a series of concerts he was going to give at the next county town.

Willie felt much pleased, and after a little conversation with Mr. English, that gentleman remarking upon the boy's great apparent love for music, asked him if he could play on any instrument.

Willie replied modestly that he was a performer in a small way on the pianoforte ; and Edward, eager to avail himself, for his brother, of any advantage that might chance to fall in his way, asked Mr. English if he could spare a few minutes, and he would get the landlord of the Bugle to allow them the use of a pianoforte that stood in an assembly-room upstairs.

Permission was readily obtained, and Willie played well one of his favourite pieces from recollection.

"Bravo !" said Mr. English, when Willie had concluded his performance. "Capital execution for one so young ; but do you know anything of the ground-work of music,—the science, I mean ? Nothing is to be done without a competent knowledge of that."

"If you," said Edward, addressing Mr. English, "will write down some figures, my brother will show how far he can succeed in playing chords to them. Here is a piece of music paper luckily at hand."

Mr. English did as he desired, and Willie acquitted himself well, playing the chords correctly, and in good

taste. He then, by Edward's desire, sang a song from one of Handel's oratorios.

"Sweet voice!" said Mr. English, who paid Willie the compliment of listening attentively to him; then turning to Edward, he exclaimed, with animation—

"This boy ought to be brought up as a musician; he would be first-rate. Have you anything better in view for him?"

Edward replied in the negative; and Mr. English impatiently said, "I have a brother at the head of a school where the boys, besides being trained for the musical profession, receive the education of a gentleman. To be entered there is a boon eagerly sought after; but I have the power of getting a boy in, provided he has decided talent and diligence, and your brother has both I perceive, and I can and will benefit him. Yes, I will, my little fellow," continued he, shaking Willie heartily by the hand; "you have helped me, and one good turn deserves another."

Mr. English, besides his superior musical attainments, was a young man of excellent character, and it was always a gratification to him to do a kind act. He did not fail to fulfil his promise, and Willie, to his own great delight, and the happiness of his parents, was thus well and unexpectedly provided for.

The share that Edward had had in this event, and the heartfelt approbation bestowed upon him by his father and mother, were most gratifying to this affectionate youth. The success of his brothers was always a subject of rejoicing to Edward, and he often sought to soothe the remembrance of his own sorrows by the contemplation of their happier prospects in life.

As regarded himself, time passed on, and no change for the better took place in his situation.

The little excitement that had arisen in his favour at the time of his rescue of Peter Wyld from a watery grave had passed away, and he ceased to be regarded with anything like cordiality by the Stoneleigh people.

Dispirited and unhappy, Edward sometimes thought he would speak openly of his situation to his father; but he was always deterred from doing so by the fear of adding to the weight of suffering that still pressed heavily on his beloved parent. Besides, if he could have made up his mind to ask his father to come forward and at once demand of Mr. Jackson an explanation of his conduct, he felt that the subtle man of the law would retreat behind the ambiguity of his expression, and make it appear that the want of trust he had spoken of, in his young clerk, related to the imperfect way in which he had transacted his business.

Gr. Gordon had made several efforts, such as his health allowed of, to get his son out into a situation. He had written to many persons on the subject, but always without success; till at last, from a quarter least expected, he received a favourable answer to his application.

The gentleman in question was a solicitor in good practice, residing about twenty miles from Stoneleigh, who knew Mr. Gordon, by reputation, to be an upright lawyer and a man of good principles.

Edward's delight and satisfaction was unbounded at this good news; for the spell that so long had held him enthralled was about to be broken. The terms on which the youth was to enter into this gentleman's employment were not very advantageous, but for this Edward cared

not; it was sufficient for him that he had at last got an engagement; and he humbly hoped to retain it, and gain a good name by unwearied diligence and exemplary conduct.

Everything was finally settled, and the time fixed for Edward's leaving home. On the evening before his departure, he walked to Stoneleigh, to take leave of his friend Howard; and as he passed the post-office on his return home, he thought he might as well inquire if there were any letters brought by the second mail for Myrtle Cottage. Two or three were given him, and one, directed to his father, Edward knew to be in the handwriting of Mr. Waverley, his new employer. Thinking that the letter probably contained some fresh direction as to the time of his departure, for he was to be met at the station, Edward hastened with it to his father, and begged him to read it directly.

Mr. Gordon opened the letter immediately, but he had scarcely glanced at its contents before a change came over his countenance; and when he had arrived at the conclusion, he exclaimed,

"My poor boy!"

"What is the matter?" cried Edward.

Mr. Gordon put the letter into his son's hand, murmuring,

"It is sad—most sad!"

The letter proved indeed a heavy blow to poor Edward. It was from Mr. Waverley, announcing a change of mind in that gentleman. He said, that upon reflection he did not consider Edward well adapted to the situation he wished him to fill, and that therefore he desired to put an end to the business before it proceeded any further.

It would be difficult to describe the effect that this disappointment of his hopes took upon Edward; but, with the command he had learned to obtain over himself, he would not give way to all he felt before his father.

The poor youth, when he had read the letter through, laid it down without speaking; but his blanched cheeks and quivering lips told too plainly how bitterly he felt the disappointment.

"It is very unhandsome treatment!" exclaimed Mr. Gordon, again perusing the letter; "Mr. Waverley says he wishes to end the business before it proceeds any further. The agreement was all concluded: I will write to him."

"It would be of no use," said Edward. "Mr. Waverley might perhaps be made to pay me something for not adhering to the agreement he made—but would I take it? No."

"Certainly that is not a thing to urge," said Mr. Gordon, "nor is it what is wanted. But how wrong to treat you thus, my dear boy!"

"I suppose," said Edward, "people have told him tales about me. Howard said he saw Mr. Waverley in Stoneleigh a day or two ago, and he fancied he had been speaking to Mr. Finch."

"I remember," said Mr. Gordon, "long ago to have heard Mr. Waverley spoken of as a weak, vacillating man."

Edward was on the point of saying that he feared it would be all one whether he had to deal with weak or strong-minded men, for that a prejudice had arisen against him which would for ever mar his prospects; but looking at his father, he saw such traces of sorrow and illness on

his countenance, that he checked himself, and he determined to say nothing more at that time. Acting upon this kind resolution, he brought forward the other letters which he had obtained that evening at the post-office. They were from his absent brothers and their friends.

Allen wrote in high spirits, having just obtained from a private society a prize for the best design for a church. Osmond's letter was to inform his family that two or three fresh sitters would prevent his return home at the time he had previously mentioned, and to state his regret that he should not be at Myrtle Cottage to take leave of Edward; but that he expected soon to be called into the neighbourhood of Mr. Waverley, when he hoped he should find his brother comfortably settled in his new situation.

Edward had a hard task to command himself as he read this letter aloud to his father; but he struggled manfully with his feelings, and opened an envelope from Trevor, who had been during the last two months in Scotland with General and Mrs. Ashley. The last letter was from Frank, who could hardly find words sufficiently strong to express his pleasure at having obtained two little pupils, English boys, to teach German.

"I am to be paid," wrote the delighted lad; "and they tell me I shall have other pupils soon."

"That is owing to you, my dear Edward," said Mr. Gordon, looking kindly at his son; "it was you who took so much pains with your young brother, and to you he owes his success."

"I am most glad," replied Edward, "to have brought Frank forward in languages;" and the poor youth strove hard to forget his own troubles in the pleasure he felt at the success of his brothers.

When the perusal of the letters was finished, Edward felt glad, on his father's account, that the arrival of a friend to sit an hour or two with him put a stop for the present to any further discussion of Mr. Waverley's behaviour.

Edward would gladly have sought to relieve his full heart of a part of its burden by talking to his mother; but she and Helen had been called away that evening to attend upon an invalid friend, who was taken ill, Harry was gone with them, and the younger children being all now in bed, Edward felt himself at liberty to indulge in unrestrained meditation upon his hard lot. Never before, greatly as he had suffered, had he felt so much.

Entering the garden, he hastened to a retired seat, and, secluded from every eye, he wept long and bitterly. He then rose from his seat, and paced rapidly up and down the walks, hoping by quickness of motion to check, in some measure, the current of his thoughts; but it was of no use; the disappointment of his hopes and his blighted prospects continued to rise before him in all their sad reality. He felt not the least doubt but that, when Mr. Waverley agreed to take him into his employment, he knew nothing of his prejudice, and that that gentleman's change of mind arose from learning afterwards the reports that were in circulation to his injury. But where, thought the miserable youth, will this end? how shall I ever be cleared from this stain on my character?

It seemed to Edward that it was utterly impossible that the mystery which involved him in such deep distress should ever be cleared up. It was a hopeless case. With youth, health, and abilities, and the most ardent desire to enter the profession chosen for him, and to acquit

himself well in it, he found himself checked in the very onset of his career, and his prospects in life blighted and destroyed.

After remaining long in a state of mind painful almost beyond endurance, he quitted the garden, and went into the Gallery. He needed the relief and consolation of prayer. Bolting the door, though he felt he was there secure from interruption, he entered the inner apartment, and throwing himself on his knees, prayed long and earnestly for patience to endure his lot, and that his Heavenly Father would take pity on him, and support him under his heavy trial.

He prayed with faith and humility, and with the perfect belief that the all-seeing eye of God knew his necessity, and would order all things for his ultimate good. In the midst of his prayers, he many times recalled to mind his former pride of heart, and reflected that that had been the cause of all his misfortune.

"I trusted," said he to himself, "in my own strength, and I fell."

Earnest and sincere prayer was not without its usual benign influence, and Edward felt the benefit of his devotional exercise. His mind was more calm, and he seemed strengthened to bear his lot with greater resignation. After a time, quitting the attitude of devotion in which he had long remained praying and meditating, he passed into the sitting-room, and taking a book, endeavoured to read; but his thoughts wandered continually, and at last he gave up the attempt, and remained with folded arms resting on the table, gazing at the quiet prospect afforded by the Gallery window.

It was the height of summer; the sun was set, but the

sky still glowed with the tenderest tints of the rose; the air was laden with the perfume of flowers, and the leaves of a clump of aspen-trees rustled with a soft and lulling sound in the evening breeze.

The bright colour of the sky faded into sombre gray, the last streak of daylight died along the horizon, and the star of evening came shining forth, beautiful in its mild lustre, and still Edward sat on.

Imperceptibly soothed by nature's gentle charms, his feelings gradually lost their poignancy, and he was fast merging into that quiescent state which will sometimes follow after the feelings have been painfully and violently excited, provided there has been an effort made to bring them into proper control, when he fancied he heard some one under the window.

He listened; a strange voice was calling to him, in low husky tones, that betokened fatigue and excitement.

Edward rose and went to the window, and discovering in the twilight the figure of a man, he asked—

“Who wants me?”

“Can I speak a word or two to you directly, Master Gordon?” inquired the stranger.

Edward descended and opened the door, and on a nearer view recognising the man who stood before him, he exclaimed—

“What, Greenfield, is it you? I thought you were twenty miles off, making your fortune!”

“Why, I am doing pretty well, thank you; but with your leave I will come in and take a seat, for I have walked or run almost all the way from Longford this afternoon, and am very tired.”

“Come up, come up,” said Edward; “I am glad

to see you ; " and, procuring a light, he led the good man up the Gallery steps and gave him a chair.

" I only got two short lifts," said Greenfield ; " there was nothing on the road, and I was in too great haste to wait for the van that was coming in the evening."

" I will go and get you something to take," said Edward ; " you must be much fatigued walking so far such a sultry day as this has been ;" and the kind-hearted youth hastened away, and quickly returned with some bread and cheese, and a mug of beer.

" How are your wife and child ? " inquired Edward, as he placed the refreshment before his humble friend, and invited him to partake of it.

" Quite well, thank you, Master Gordon. My wife has better health than she used to have ; and, as to the boy, I wish you could see him ! He is grown such a fine little fellow. Ah, Sir, what should we have been now if it had not been for your goodness. My wife teaches the little one to pray for you daily ; and he is not the only one in the house that blesses you, you may rest assured."

Edward felt relieved to hear that the mother and child were both well, for he had almost feared, from Greenfield's flurried and excited manner, that there was something the matter with them.

" I should like to see little Johnny again very much," said Edward. " You are not thinking of returning to your old quarters, are you ? What can have brought you here at so late an hour ? "

" You shall hear directly," said Greenfield, finishing his draught of beer. " I can talk now. No, Master Gordon, I am not thinking of leaving Longford, for I am doing uncommonly well there. Captain Hastings—you

remember my telling you about him—has been as good as his word, and he has got the officers to employ me, and their ladies too; and my wife binds—does it all herself, and yet keeps me comfortable, and the house tidy, and herself and the child always clean and fit to be seen. I do not believe, Sir, there is a better wife in England.”

“I do not think there is,” said Edward, entering into the poor shoemaker’s feelings. “She was the picture of neatness, and so was your cottage, when you lived here.”

“I often tell her,” continued Greenfield, “that she must not work too hard; and yesterday, when I went into our little parlour to tea, she was sitting resting her head on her hand. ‘You have done too much, I know,’ said I; but she looked up cheerfully, and replied that she had only got a little headache; and on my asking her if there was anything I could get her, she said she had a great fancy for a cup of Mr. Newman’s best mixed tea. Mr. Newman lives in Queen-street, and is the first grocer in Longford. So off I set, willingly enough, to get my wife a little treat.

“When I got to the shop, I found the young men all busy serving customers, but Mr. Newman himself had just done attending to some ladies, and while he was tying up their last parcel, I looked at the pictures on some French plum boxes that were standing on the counter, and there was a child on the lid of one of them so like my little Johnny, that I could not take my eyes off it, and in the mean time up comes a young chap, and takes the place of the ladies, and gets served before me.

“‘A bottle of orange wine and a pot of marmalade, Mr. Newman,’ said the lad; ‘and please to be as quick as you can. Master has got some young gentlemen come in

unexpectedly, and he is in a hurry.' Mr. Newman quickly brought forward the articles, and the boy handed him a bank-note to change. 'A five-pound note,' said the grocer; and he held it up to the light, and turned it about, first one way and then another; but he seemed to think it all right, for he laid the note in the till, and took out the change; but just as he was going to lay the money down, he gave the boy an examining look, and said—

"Who do you live with? who is your master?"

"The Reverend Mr. Wilmot, of the Grove," answered the boy, quite sharp.

"All right," replied Mr. Newman; and he gave the boy the change. As he turned to leave the shop, I caught sight of the young chap's face, and who should it be but Stephen Dennis."

"Stephen Dennis!" exclaimed Edward, who, from the time of the first mention of the five-pound bank-note, had been in a state of great excitement.

"Yes," replied Greenfield, "it was him, sure enough, though he looked pale and ill, and limped a little in his walk. I did not speak to him, for though we were neighbours in a sense, I never liked the lad, so I bought my tea, and went my way; but as I was turning out of Queen-street, on the opposite side, there I saw standing, chaffing, among a party of shabby-looking boys, Master Stephen, and, thinks I to myself, 'If Mr. Wilmot is in a hurry for his wine and his marmalade, he ought to have sent a more diligent messenger than you.'"

"Well, Master Edward," continued Greenfield, "when I got home, and was sitting at tea, with little Johnny on my lap, I could not get that chap Stephen Dennis out of my mind; and I told my wife that I had seen him, and

what he had been about. Bless me! I wonder we were not scalded to death, the child and I, for you never saw such a start as my wife gave with the teakettle in her hand, when I mentioned the five-pound note.

"That is Mr. Jackson's five-pound note, I would lay my life," exclaimed she; "do you not remember, I always said to you, that there was something very strange in Stephen disappearing from the neighbourhood just at the time there was such a stir made about Master Gordon having stolen that note?" I beg your pardon, Sir, for using such words to you,—but you will excuse me, I know."

"Excuse you! oh yes!" replied Edward, almost breathless with expectation. "Go on—go on."

"Well, Master Edward," continued Greenfield, "women are always so 'cute; and my wife said directly that she did not believe a word about Stephen's living with Mr. Wilmot; and off she made me go directly to the clergyman's house, and inquire if the boy lived there. I was very willing to do anything in the cause, you may believe me; but as I was looking for my hat, I said to my wife, it was not very likely that if Stephen had stolen the note out of Mr. Jackson's office, he would have kept it all this time without spending it. My wife replied that we could not tell; and sent me off as fast as I could go, and told me, if it was untrue, as she was sure it was, that the boy lived in the Grove, to go and hunt about the streets till I found him."

The hope that had been awakened in Edward's breast died away at this suggestion of Greenfield's; but then again, he thought, why had the shoemaker come to him, if he had no good news to tell, and he eagerly exclaimed—

"Did you find Stephen? Do not keep me in suspense; tell me all at once."

"You must let me tell my story in my own way, if you please, Master Edward," said Greenfield, "and," added he, with a droll twinkle of the eye, "you did not use to care so much about where or how Stephen Dennis lived."

"I will try and be patient," said Edward; and Greenfield continued—

"I was not long in getting to Mr. Wilmot's house, and, going in the back way, I asked a maid-servant, who was just coming out of the kitchen, if she would be so good as to tell me if her master had a lad of the name of Stephen Dennis in his service; and she answered that Mr. Wilmot did not keep a boy at all, and never had done so since she lived at the Grove, and that was near upon two years. Well, thought I, my wife is right so far, and my next business is to search for this graceless young vagabond, who can tell lies with such a bold face; and I considered within myself, as I walked slowly on, where I should be most likely to find him; at the same time, I must own I thought it very improbable that any boy who had stolen money would be so long without spending it."

"Perhaps he had been ill," said Edward; "you say he looked so."

"You are not far wrong there, Master Gordon," replied Greenfield, "and the same thought, after a time, struck me; and thinking, if the chap was taking to evil courses, I had better look for him in a part of the town which I know people of indifferent character frequent, therefore I bent my steps to a place called 'Broker's Row.' Broker's Row is a narrow street, with a number of mean houses in it, and a few low slop-sellers' shops. Here, and hereabout, I stationed myself, watching for a full hour and a half, and seeing nothing of the boy, I was

thinking of going in search of him somewhere else, when, right before me, coming out of one of the worst-looking houses, I spied Master Stephen. I kept my eye upon him, thinking how I had better proceed, for I considered that if I was to go up to him at once, and ask him how he came by the bank-note he had changed at Mr. Newman's shop, lame as he was, he would soon dash into one of the houses, or narrow lanes, close by, and hide himself from any search I could make. Just as I was debating what to do for the best, up came a policeman, to whom I mentioned my suspicions, and bid him keep his eye upon the boy."

"That boy is only just come out of the hospital," said the policeman; "but if you suspect him, there is no need for ceremony;" and he went up and clapped hold of Stephen at once.

"What do you want?" cried the boy, turning as pale as death.

"I want to see what you have in your pockets," replied the policeman.

"Nothing," said Stephen.

"We will see as to that," said the policeman, who perceived at once that there was something wrong about the chap, and he walked him off at quick time to the station-house, when, on being searched, the remains of the five-pound note,—four pounds eighteen shillings, were taken from him."

"Tell me, oh! do tell me," exclaimed Edward, agitated beyond the power of control, "did Stephen steal the note from Mr. Jackson's desk?"

But Greenfield would not be put out of his own way of telling his tale; and he went on to state that, as soon

as the boy was secured, he hastened off to Mr. Newman's, and begged him not to part with the note he had received from Stephen Dennis at present. He then related that the boy was had up before a magistrate the next morning, to give an account of himself, and to say how he came to have so much money in his possession. Stephen's history, which was elicited from him with some trouble, was briefly this :—He had become acquainted with the son of a travelling showman attending a fair at Stoneleigh, and had been induced to join the company, and soon disliking the life, for he found himself obliged to work, and was besides ill-treated, he determined to run away; and fancying he was pursued, he crossed a railway incautiously, just as a train was coming up, which knocked him down, and passing over him, broke both his thighs, and otherwise seriously injured him. He was conveyed to an hospital, where, after a time, it appeared that he was frequently visited by a young gentleman, who lent him books of a serious character, and very often conversed with him on religious subjects.

It so happened that this young man was passing the justice-room at the time Stephen was being taken there in the charge of the policeman, and he entered to learn what was the matter. Whether it was the presence of this young man, or the working of a newly awakened conscience, is uncertain, but when Stephen was asked to account for having a five-pound note in his possession, he, to the astonishment of all present, confessed at once that he had stolen it from the desk of Mr. Jackson, the solicitor, of Stoneleigh; and thinking, perhaps, that it might be some extenuation of his offence, he said he did not go into the office for the purpose of robbing Mr. Jackson, but

with the intention of being in some way or other revenged upon Edward. The lad had seen Edward come out to look at the dragoon regiment passing through the town, and had observed that he had left the door open; and he stole into the office, and looked round for the means of doing some mischief or other that might bring the young gentleman who had thrashed him into trouble.

Edward, on hearing this, recalled to mind that he had two or three times observed the lad lurking about the office.

Nothing immediately presented itself to Stephen's notice; but perceiving Mr. Jackson's desk unlocked, he opened it, and there beheld the five-pound bank-note, which he seized upon, and instantly made his escape with.

It seemed doubtful whether, in securing this prize, the lad had not forgotten his purpose towards Edward, and thought only of the advantage so large a sum of money would be to himself.

On being questioned why he had kept the bank-note so long without parting with it, he replied that he was afraid to offer it at any shop in Stoneleigh; and that while with the showman he had had no opportunity of spending it, and that he was only just discharged from the hospital when Greenfield saw him at Mr. Newman's, the grocer. During all this time the bank-note had been concealed between the boy's coat and the lining of it.

Greenfield then went on to say that Stephen Dennis's confession before the magistrate was taken down and properly signed by himself and others; and that immediately afterwards the five-pound bank-note was procured from Mr. Newman and given into the possession of Green-

field, for the purpose of its being restored to Mr. Jackson through Edward. Greenfield and his family had long been known to, and respected by the magistrate, and that gentleman was also well informed of all the particulars of Edward's hard case.

During Greenfield's narrative, the latter part of it especially, Edward had had the greatest difficulty in controlling himself; and when at last he found that the bank-note was actually in the possession of his humble friend, he broke forth into expressions of heartfelt delight at this most happy and unexpected termination of his trouble. He thanked Greenfield repeatedly, in the warmest terms, for his truly kind exertions in his cause, and bestowed on him many well-deserved encomiums for the cleverness with which he had conducted his proceedings.

"Pray, Master Gordon," said Greenfield, as he concluded his history, "do you chance to remember the names of any of Sir Henry Arundel's tenants that came to pay their rent, before Mr. Jackson mentioned the loss of the bank-note?"

"There had been but very few before that time," answered Edward; "let me think a minute," continued he,—"there were Burns and Jones, old clients of my father's, and Thompson, too, he came and paid his rent; and there was another man, a stranger to me, who brought a little boy into the office with him, and I asked the child his name, and it was so singular a one, that I remember it: it was Obadiah Packington, and the little boy said he was so named after his father."

"That is it; proof upon proof, if we want any more!" exclaimed Greenfield, and pulling out an old pocket-book, he carefully opened it, and taking out the

identical bank-note, with Obadiah Packington written on it, and a copy of Stephen Dennis's confession, witnessed and signed, spread them before the delighted eyes of Edward.

"And now, Master Gordon," said the kind-hearted shoemaker, rising to depart, "you may go and tell your good news to your parents; they will be glad enough to hear it, I know."

"But you must not go," said Edward, "you must stop and sleep here. Papa and mamma will be so glad to see you."

Greenfield thanked Edward for his obliging offer; but said he preferred returning to Stoneleigh, where he should pass the night at a friend's house, in order to be in readiness to start early in the morning for Longford.

Edward then, first repaying the two shillings that had been advanced in reclaiming the note from Mr. Newman, pressed money upon his good friend to defray the expense of his journey back; but this Greenfield positively refused, saying, he ought to pay Edward for the pleasure that through his means had been afforded him; for, said he, as Edward led him down and took leave of him at the Gallery door,

"I do not think I ever felt so pleased in all my life as I did when I found that innocence would be righted, and that that suspicious, mean, cold-hearted old fellow, Mr. Jackson,—I beg his pardon for calling him these names,—would be put to shame."

Edward did not go immediately to seek his parents. He returned into the Gallery, feeling in his heart where his first attention was due. He acknowledged the tender mercy and pitying love of his Heavenly Father, who had

permitted his heavy affliction to be turned from him, and had suffered him to be restored to happiness, and the blessing of an unblemished character; and with his whole soul deeply moved, he poured forth his most fervent thanksgivings to God.

CHAPTER XXXV.

CONCLUSION.

WITH a light heart and buoyant step, such as he had long been a stranger to, Edward quitted the Gallery, and entered the house just as his mother, with Helen and Harry, returned from their visit to the invalid. Rushing up to his mother, Edward threw his arms round her and embraced her again and again; he then caught hold of Helen and danced about the room with her, calling out from time to time—

“The bank-note is found, the bank-note is found, and my character will be cleared!”

Then stopping short in these wild expressions of delight, he shook Harry warmly by the hand, and exclaimed—

“Perhaps, now, I may be able to assist you. Where is my father?” continued he; “let me fly to tell him my good news;” and followed by his mother, Helen, and Harry, who hardly yet comprehended the nature of Edward’s joy, he ran into the room where his father was sitting.

Mr. Gordon was alone, and in a state of great dejection, for his friend, who had just left him, had been talk-

ing with him without reserve on Edward's prospects, and the injury that had been done to the youth's character by his abrupt dismissal from Mr. Jackson's employ. By this gentleman, Mr. Gordon was first made aware, to the full extent, of the malicious reports that had been so diligently circulated against his son, and he felt sure that these calumnies had been, in a great measure, the cause of the unhappiness that appeared at times to overwhelm Edward. At the same time, Mr. Gordon was sensibly affected by the forbearance and resolution his son had shown in keeping to himself such deep causes of affliction.

It will easily be imagined that, under these circumstances, the joyful news Edward had to impart was doubly welcome. The father seemed suddenly relieved from the pressure of a heavy load on his mind, and in tones of heartfelt gladness he rejoiced with his son on the happy discovery that had been made, which would restore him not only to happiness, but put to silence all the base reports that were in circulation against him.

Nor was Mrs. Gordon less affected by this most happy event; with breathless interest she listened to the exciting details of Edwards's history, repeated as he had heard them from Greenfield; and when he had concluded, she folded her son in her arms, and wept over him tears arising from the tenderest emotion and the liveliest joy.

Helen, too, deeply sympathized in her brother's happiness; and Harry was all impatience that Mr. Jackson, that "hard-hearted, cruel man," should be told of the great wrong and injustice he had done his brother.

This was naturally a point of the greatest importance with Edward, and he pondered for some time on the best way of letting his late master know that he was not a per-

son "in whom no trust could be reposed." A last he hit upon a plan, which met with general approbation ; and Harry was not a little pleased to find he was to be the chief actor in it.

What Edward decided upon was, to inclose the five-pound bank-note and the confession of Stephen Dennis in an envelope, seal it, and direct it to Mr. Jackson, and have it delivered to him, without word or comment, by Harry in the morning.

It may be as well here to mention, that the capture of Stephen Dennis led to a discovery highly interesting to one of the personages who has borne a prominent part in this history.

From something that transpired during the lad's examination before the magistrate, as to his father's mode of obtaining a livelihood, a warrant was obtained to search the house of the elder Dennis. Nothing was found to bring immediate discredit upon Mark ; but during the examination of his house, an old box was dragged forth from an obscure corner, where it had lain for above two years, and which Mrs. Dennis said belonged to a man who had once lodged with them, but who had never returned to claim it. Mark said, and with truth, that he believed it contained nothing of value : had he known what was in the box, he would have broken it open long ago without any ceremony, and sacked its contents.

On being forced open by the man in authority, nothing at first appeared but some worn-out articles of man's apparel ; but on further search, a small bundle of what seemed only pieces of old cloth was discovered, on unfolding which, wrapped up in a handkerchief marked B. J., was old Jarvis's highly-valued watch. There was no

doubt as to the identity of this watch, for inside the lid was a curiously-cut paper, on the middle of which was inscribed Benjamin Jarvis, the old man's Christian and surname.

The watch had been the gift of his father, and it afforded the poor old man very great pleasure when it was restored to him, after so great a lapse of time, and when he considered that it was lost to him for ever.

But to return to our tale. The morning following Greenfield's propitious visit to Edward, Harry was all impatience to set forth on the errand with which he was delighted to be intrusted; but Edward would not suffer his brother to go till near the time when Mr. Jackson was in the habit of being at his office. When at last the hour arrived, the envelope being securely placed in Harry's pocket, the boy departed, amidst the strictest charges from all the family to be most careful of the precious packet of which he was the bearer.

Harry was fully impressed with the importance of his mission, walking steadily on, and scarcely turning his head to the right or the left till he arrived at the end of his journey. With a firm hand he knocked at the office door; and on being desired to enter, he walked in with an erect mien and the air of one who was arrived to settle at once an affair of the greatest importance.

Mr. Jackson was seated at his desk; and Harry, taking off his hat, went up to him and said,

"Sir, I am Harry Gordon, brother of Edward Gordon, your late clerk;" and without uttering another word, the boy laid the envelope before Mr. Jackson and immediately quitted the office.

Harry had hardly been returned from his errand ten

minutes, and was still talking on the subject with Edward and Helen, in a room where his parents were sitting, when a sharp pull at the door-bell announced the arrival of a visitor; and immediately after, scarcely giving the servant time to say his name, in rushed Mr. Jackson, greatly excited and somewhat out of breath.

"I am come," said he, addressing Edward, "to beg your pardon. I have been wrong, very wrong, hasty and ill-judging; that is too much my way, I do not reflect as I ought—can you forgive me?"

"Willingly," said Edward, holding out his hand to his former master.

"That is right," said Mr. Jackson, seizing Edward's hand and shaking it warmly. "Fine fellow! Never had such a youth to work before—never one so respectful and well-behaved. But," continued he, turning to Mr. Gordon, "I have been so deceived, so imposed upon, so ill-used, I must say, by young men who had every reason to behave well to me, that I grew suspicious, and doubted every one."

"Allowance," said Mr. Gordon, considerately, "ought undoubtedly to be made for a man under such circumstances."

"I am very angry with myself, notwithstanding," continued Mr. Jackson, speaking very fast; "I am afraid, from what I have heard lately,—the parties themselves never hear anything for such a long while,—that I have done Edward harm. My sudden dismissal of him I find has been very much talked of to his disadvantage. Very strange how that could be, though, for I never said a word of my own suspicions to any one; I kept them all to myself."

"Your dismissing Edward from your employ," said Mrs. Gordon, "without assigning a sufficient reason, was quite enough to create a prejudice against the youth."

"So I find—so I find. Well, there is no recalling the past," said Mr. Jackson; "what we have to do is with the future. But first, do you forgive me, Edward?"

"Quite, quite," replied Edward, his countenance glowing with animation and happiness.

"Well, then," said Mr. Jackson, "I shall never rest, never be at peace with myself, till I have made you some amends. You are of a forgiving nature, I see, and we could live very well together; you must be my clerk again; but not as before. I will have you artied to me, and I make you a present of your articles. Are you willing that it should be so?"

"Indeed I am," exclaimed Edward, "and thank you most kindly for your generous intention towards me."

"No, no, not generous," said Mr. Jackson; "it is only an act of justice, common justice. But you must live with me, I must have you in my house; I cannot attend to you properly unless you do so. We must have you a clever man of business. I shall be wanting a partner in time. Jackson and Gordon sounds well, does it not? The name of Gordon would be a help to any firm. But what is your father going to say? Remember, I will have no objections made to my plan, my worthy friend Gordon."

"I am not going to offer any objection," said Mr. Gordon, "to your most obliging offer of taking Edward as your artied clerk, for I see yours is a disposition that will not be satisfied without making reparation for an injury done, and Edward has been seriously injured; but

there the benefit must rest. I cannot allow you wholly to charge yourself with my son."

"Then I will not take him at all," said Mr. Jackson; "and," added he, half-laughing, and with a very comical look, "Edward must remain under a cloud during the tedious time that people will be learning the truth of the matter. And I will not help them to a right knowledge of the facts. No, no, Mr. Gordon, you are too good a father to stand in your son's light. Say at once he shall come to me in the way I wish. Well, I see you do not refuse; that is enough; I will not have a word more."

"Except," said Mr. Gordon, "that your conduct is very handsome. It is not every one who would so nobly confess himself to have done a wrong, and make such ample reparation for it."

Mr. Jackson appeared gratified with this observation; but, in his abrupt manner, he exclaimed,—

"Perhaps, after all, I am only seeking to serve myself, for Edward is a first-rate youth, both as to talents and good conduct, and I shall find it to my own interest to bring him forward, and make a friend of him."

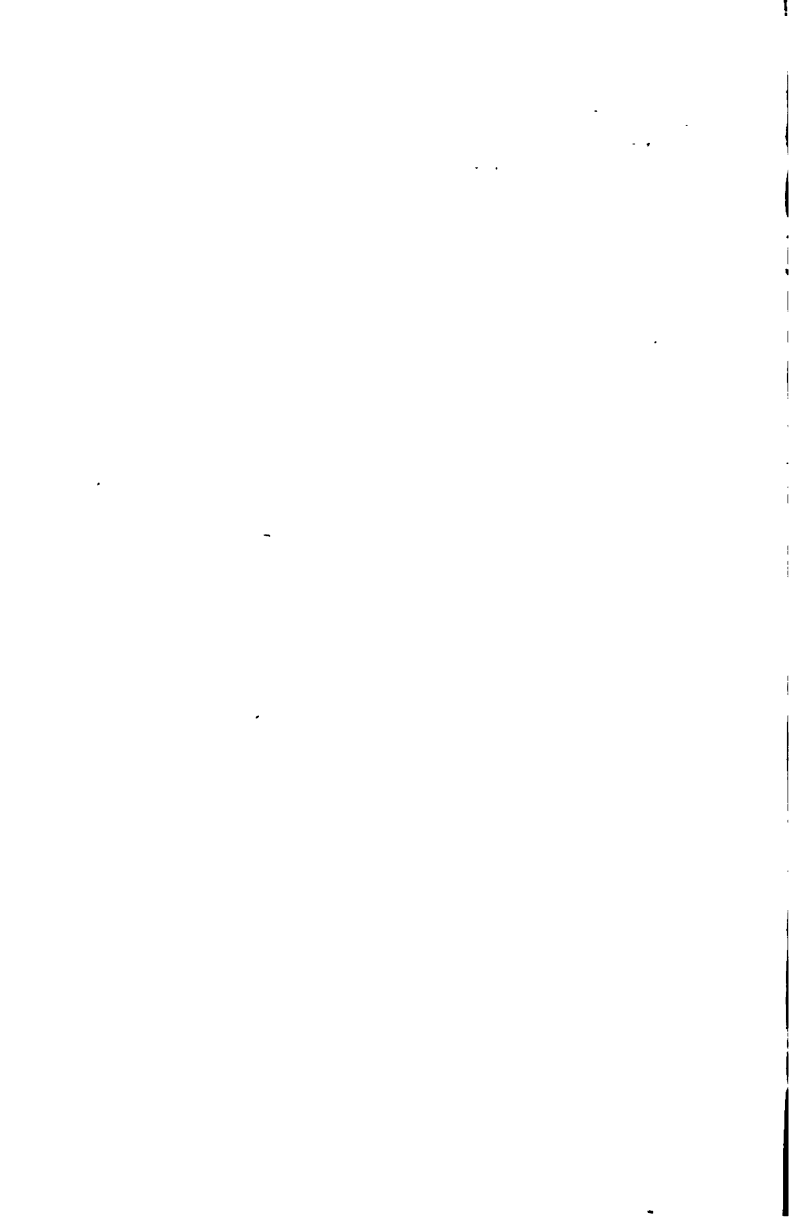
"I will serve you faithfully and well, Mr. Jackson," said Edward; "at least it shall be my earnest endeavour to do so."

"You may believe him," said Mr. Gordon; "Edward will have the interest of his master at heart. My boy is undoubtedly not faultless, but I firmly believe that, with the blessing of God, he would never deliberately do what is wrong. And though he is my own son, I must be allowed to say his principles are sound and good, and it is his most ardent wish to become a useful and honourable member of society."

"I do not doubt it," said Mr. Jackson, warmly; "and in taking Edward to my home, I feel that he will make the happiness of it, as he and his brothers have made the happiness of yours."

"What you say," replied Mr. Gordon, "is most just and true: we have suffered loss of fortune, privations, and sickness, but the good conduct of our boys has at all times cheered and comforted us, and spread around our home the invaluable blessings of peace, content, and love."

THE END.



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